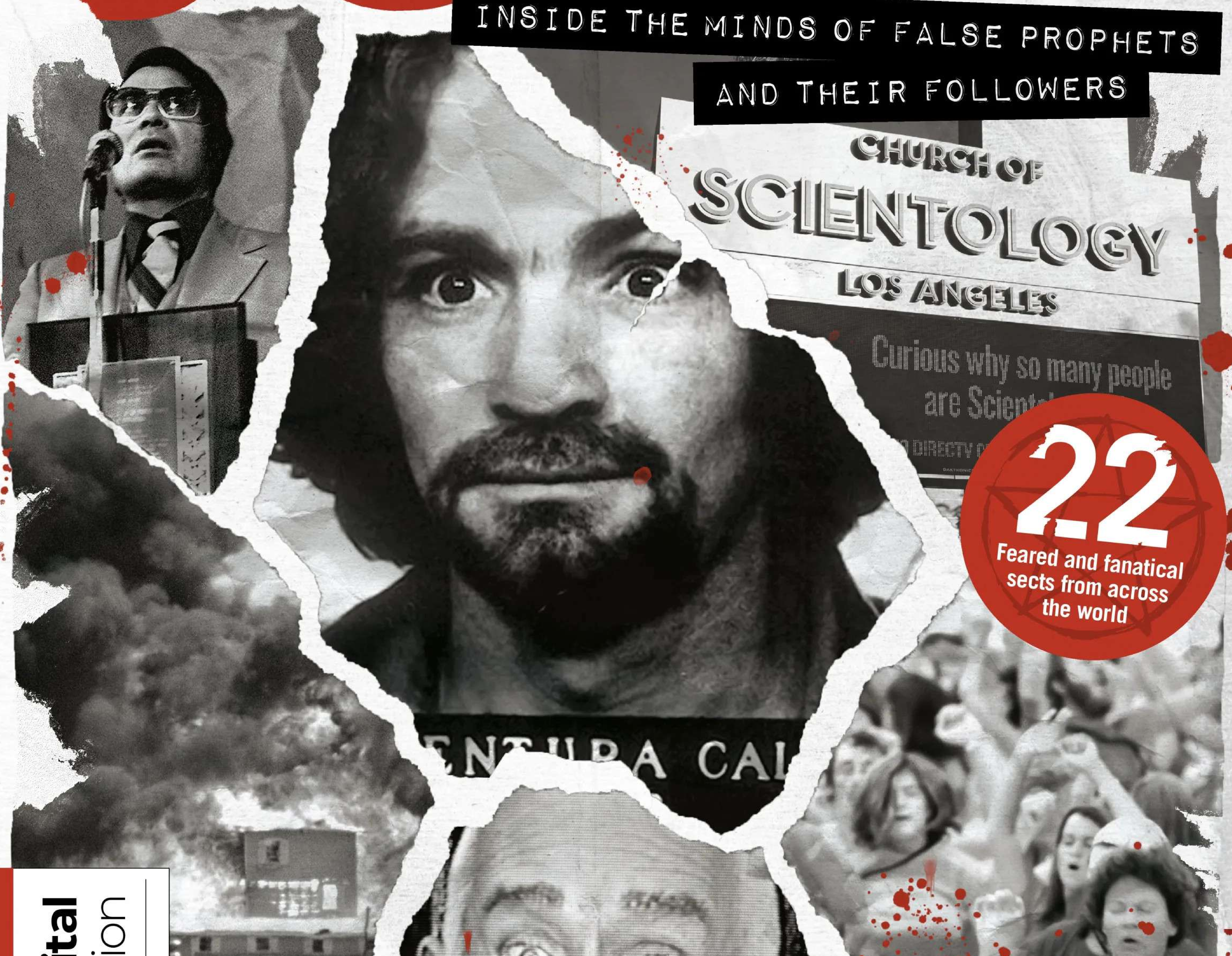
NEW

THE HISTORY OF CULTS

INSIDE THE MINDS OF FALSE PROPHETS AND THEIR FOLLOWERS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22 Feared and fanatical sects from across the world

FROM ANCIENT GODS TO MODERN-DAY MOVEMENTS

THE MANSON FAMILY, JONESTOWN, WACO, NXIVM AND MANY MORE

INSIDE SOCIETY'S ENDLESS FASCINATION WITH CULTS

Digital Edition
FUTURE
FIRST EDITION

YOUR SALVATION AWAITS

Good day to you. I wonder if you might have a few moments to talk about our movement? It really won't take long. In this modern world everyone is in such a hurry, far too busy to stop and see what really matters. We like to encourage people to think about the true message and how they can ensure that they are not left behind when the time comes. Here is one of our leaflets. You'll see that we offer a range of services, all dedicated to helping folks on their journey to true enlightenment. They do involve a small fee, but don't let that put you off. After all, you can't put a price on eternal happiness can you? Plus, all proceeds go towards the church and funding other programmes. I won't bore you with the details – it's all covered on page 8. See there? Yes, that is indeed the actor from that new movie. We have quite a few famous members among our flock. As the Grand Master likes to say, all are welcome beneath his roof. Speaking of which, we've recently opened our local branch. If you have some time I'd be more than happy to take you for a look around. I'm pretty sure that once you see it you won't ever want to leave...

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FUTURE

THE HISTORY OF CULTS

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DEADLY

WHAT IS A CULT? WHY DO A SELECT FEW END SO CATASTROPHICALLY? THE ANSWERS ARE COMPLEX, THE TRUTH OFTEN OBSCURED BY MISINFORMATION AND SENSATIONALISM

WORDS **MARTYN CONTERIO**

CULTS

© Getty Images

Welcome to Jonestown
Peoples Temple Agricultural Project

Image source: Jonestown Institute

> **“ IT’S ONLY REALLY FROM THE 1960S COUNTERCULTURE ONWARDS THAT CULTS BEGAN TO GAIN ANY MAJOR ATTENTION IN THE WIDER WORLD – MOST OF IT ENTIRELY NEGATIVE ”**

Salvation is a powerful word, a powerful concept – to be redeemed, saved, to serve a higher purpose, be guided by divine hands, to find something worth living for beyond the daily grind of our increasingly frazzled and frail consumerist society. A cult can provide – or appear to provide – the answers to what we seek. In this confusing world of ours, there are sadly more questions than answers. Cult leaders have routinely been accused of being great sinners rather than absolute angels sent from on high. David Koresh – whose Branch Davidian sect literally went up in flames when the ATF and FBI instigated a controversial siege of the sect’s property at Waco, Texas, in 1993 – was branded the “Sinful Messiah” by the *Waco Tribune-Herald*.

Our search for enlightenment and direction is deep, profound and as old as humanity itself. The big ‘why?’ of our creation has gnawed at us persistently. Perhaps it is unanswerable; a void into which we place all kinds of theories and notions. These ideas are then dressed and presented as sureties – the truth instead of a possible truth. Religions, mainstream or otherwise, posit that their deity, teachings and insights are the truest of all truths available. But what exactly is a cult?

For some, the succour of religion provides moral and spiritual superiority over others. They are the anointed ones, the chosen few. The rest of the world is blinded by their vices and the materialistic accoutrements of modern life. Most people who find their way into a minority religion – a sect, a cult, a fringe group, there are a host of names – are generally searching for something missing in their lives. They might be hard-wired with a desire to selflessly help others or wish to live communally and well outside of the mainstream. They might believe it is their purpose to convert others to their way of thinking. One fact we can be sure about is that cults have existed since the dawn of humankind.

In ancient times, cults arose to worship myriad wonders of the natural world and subsequently developed complex mythologies. Religions fade away, are replaced or transformed. It’s only really from the 1960s counterculture onwards that cults began to gain any major attention in the wider world – most of it entirely negative and so feeding a narrative that

© Getty Images

LEFT The entrance to Jonestown, the cult compound in the jungle of Guyana, which was ruled with an iron fist by leader Jim Jones

> “ WHAT ATTRACTS PEOPLE TO CULTS DEPENDS ON WHAT THE INDIVIDUAL IS SEEKING ”

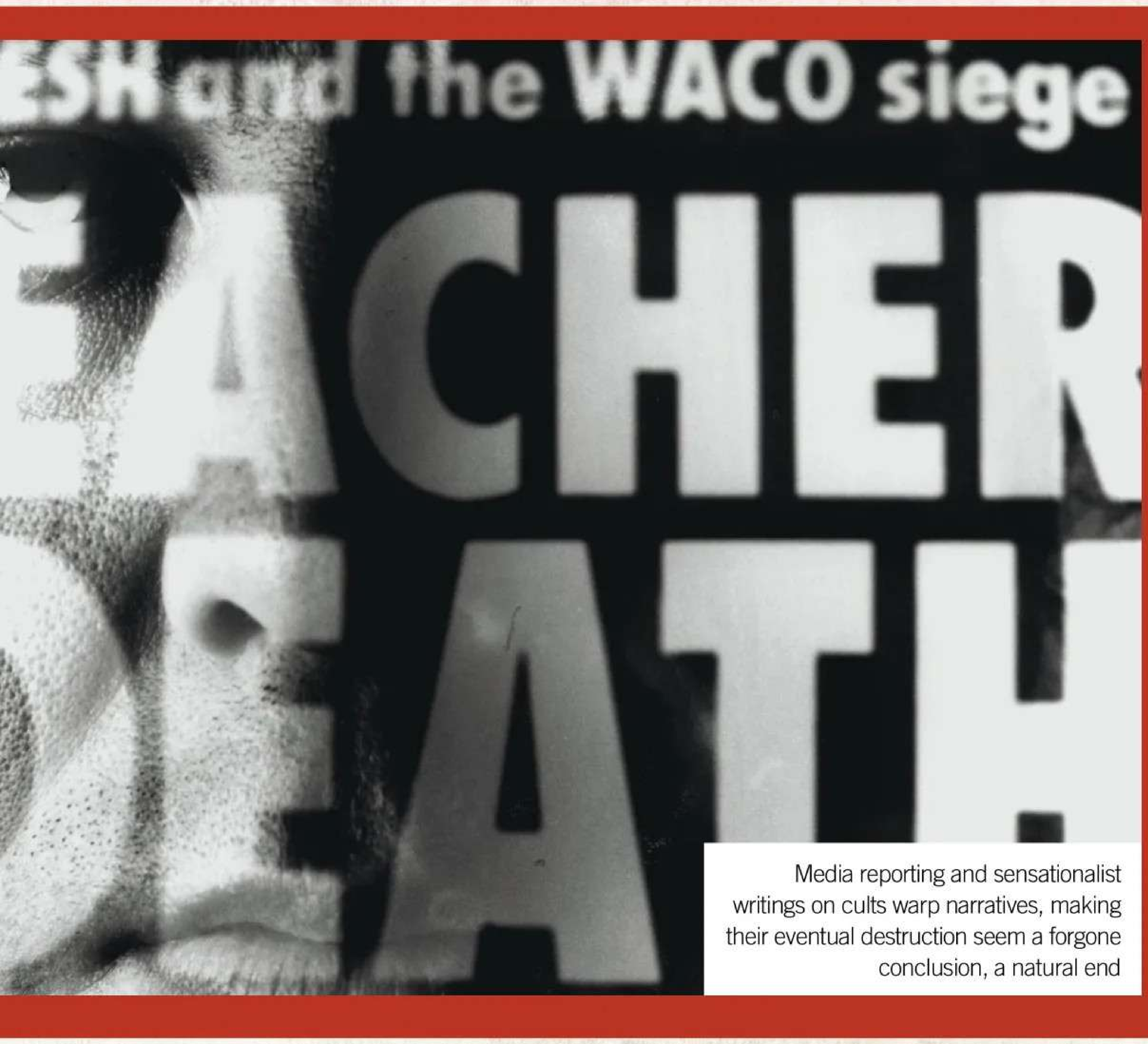
their kooky practices and world views are inherently sinister, malevolent and destructive to the secular social order of the modern world.

The Branch Davidians, Peoples Temple, Heaven's Gate, Children of God, The Order of the Solar Temple, Scientology, The Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God, Aum Shinrikyo, The Nation of Yahweh: these are the names of groups that have caused a stir. In 2020, Shincheonji Church of Jesus, an apocalypse cult teaching that illness is a sin, garnered attention in its native South Korea and beyond when outbreaks of COVID-19 were traced to its venues, the cult wilfully dismissing government guidance. As one can imagine, during the global pandemic, its leader Lee Man-hee and his 240,000 followers acting as super-spreaders didn't go down well. The coverage of Shincheonji highlights how newer cults attract the opprobrium of society and the news media, even when they're hardly alone in questioning or ignoring government guidelines.

The term 'cult' means different things to different people. To those who worship in minority religious groups, it's tantamount to insinuating that their beliefs are inherently weird or criminal, and its adherents brainwashed zombies. To them, it's considered an offensive word. 'Cult' in pop culture, though, boasts nerdy, positive qualities. Film fans revere 'cult movies', many of which were unpopular on initial release. All sorts of fans dress up as their favourite comic-book, film or TV characters in what is called cosplay. *Star Wars* fans have taken to putting down their religion as 'Jedi' on census forms. In other words, we all gravitate towards worshipping something in some form… a football club, a movie, a television show, a novel. Subcultures are not that far away from cults. Yet cultural pursuits are seen as harmless – no matter how all-consuming – and religious activities outside the big monotheistic religions automatically dubbed suspect.

While the terminology and its helpfulness can be disputed – and it has been – what defines a cult is generally agreed to be an unorthodox movement existing outside mainstream teaching, and being outside the norm almost immediately pegs them as something to fret about. This does not necessarily swing us immediately into negative territory. After all, most major religions today began as sects with a few followers, and the spreading of their word garnered more followers. The Passion of the Christ on the hill of Golgotha is arguably the most famous story ever told. Saints of the Catholic Church are venerated for their sacrifices from the days when Christianity was a growing sect and followers persecuted to death. This sense of persecution by society has been a constant too.

What attracts people to cults depends on what the individual is seeking. Those who were attracted to the Branch Davidians might already have had a foot in the Seventh-day Adventist world. A splinter group from Seventh-day Adventism, the Branch Davidians formed in 1955 and preached new interpretations of the Book of Revelations – and its readings of theology were certainly unique. Jim Jones's Peoples Temple, meanwhile, mixed religion with social justice, and one of its leader's big ideas was to establish an agricultural community to best exemplify his teachings and view of life. What leaders of cults offer can be said to be an alternative to the chaos around us, but also a way to achieve



Media reporting and sensationalist writings on cults warp narratives, making their eventual destruction seem a forgone conclusion, a natural end

SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

SOME CULTS REACT TO CONSTANT NEGATIVE PRESS BY ACTING OUT THE BEHAVIOURS THEY'RE ACCUSED OF

The term 'deviance amplification' was coined by sociologists in the 1960s to describe the effect of mass media reporting on 'deviant behaviour' and how it subsequently draws attention to – and even promotes, therefore 'amplifying' – such behaviour. The hysteria could apply to everything from rock 'n' roll to drug-taking fads to social media phenomena such as the drinking game 'neknominate'.

In the world of minority religions, deviance amplification describes how some cults will begin to act out as their exaggerated public image dictates. What happens then is the media-stoked furore around cults feeds the headlines, suggesting that the cult's behaviour (and in several instances, their subsequent demise) was a self-fulfilling prophecy, because deep down they were always bad people and they showed this to be the case via their actions. The problem with this is it absolves the media and their very often crucial part in the whole sorry process.

> “ SOME CULTS WILL BEGIN TO ACT OUT AS THEIR EXAGGERATED PUBLIC IMAGE DICTATES ”

© Getty Images

Q&A

WE GET THE LOWDOWN ON DEADLY CULTS FROM A RESPECTED EXPERT IN THE FIELD

What is the appeal in joining a cult?

Nobody joins a cult. That's an important thing to get out there. Nobody goes out looking for a cult. They're not approached on the street and converted all of a sudden. It's different for different people. It's much more common that somebody is already searching for something, exploring different things, before picking one religious movement that really appeals. They are people looking for something extra in their lives, they're questioning the purpose of life. A lot of people can begin doing charity work. Peoples Temple was a real social justice movement before it moved to Jonestown and became problematic. That had a huge appeal to people across racial divides, which is really unusual in America. They did a lot of charitable work, cared for the elderly – it had a good social ring to it.

How and why do some groups begin to engage in illegal and criminal behaviour?

It's really hard to answer, because you can't get inside the mind of the leader or [fully understand] their actions. It should be said that it's quite rare for religious groups to engage in criminal behaviour, but I think there could be something about the structure of the organisation, or the leader has so much power within the group that anything the leader says goes. I don't think there's any one reason they become engaged in criminal activity. Sometimes, it can be a belief in the ends justifying the means.

Is brainwashing a real phenomenon?

It's a metaphor. It's a bit like the term 'cult' – it's just a short-hand term for saying, "We know what's happened here," when really we don't. It's not allowed in legal cases because it's not a recognised medical or psychological term. It's again short-hand for meaning that a person has joined a religious movement we don't like. You need to look at why that person joined a movement, the pushes and pulls that made them join within their own life. When you say somebody has been brainwashed, that doesn't tell you anything, it just confuses the matter.

Image source: Sarah Harvey

DOCTOR SARAH HARVEY

Doctor Sarah Harvey is the senior research officer and primary media liaison at Inform, the independent educational charity providing the public with evidence-based information on minority sects. She specialises in millennial movements, pagan religions and new Christian movements.

Marshall Applewhite, founder and co-leader of Heaven's Gate. He and other members committed suicide to try and achieve their spiritual aims

ABOVE Many Order of the Solar Temple members committed suicide at a farm in France. Their remains were found by the police

LEFT Aum Shinrikyo founder Shoko Asahara, photographed in Russia in 1994. The cult became infamous for using deadly chemical weapons on the general public

emotional comfort and a sense of belonging. Unfortunately, power structures in cults can often result in abuse, with one dominant figure ruling over all others. There are countless descriptions of all sorts of errant behaviour and manipulative techniques used to control people from survivors who have escaped. L. Ron Hubbard is said to have got into religion to make millions, but it's incorrect to declare that all cults operate in bad faith from the get go. Even so, some cults err more than others, but identifying them can be a challenge.

There are thousands of cults worldwide that keep a low profile, commit no great harm and pose no immediate danger to their neighbours. Maybe they even do some good in their communities. Chances are, you won't ever spot them unless they do something criminal or commit an outrage that is subsequently reported on with mystification by those outside its purview. Not all cults are like Scientology, with its celebrity centres and huge real-estate ventures that makes it cash-rich even if it's vague about the size of its membership. Some are secretive by nature. Shincheonji has been accused of training its members to lie about membership. If queried, devotees are armed with ready-made answers to deflect attention and deny any such thing.

Even a group that went spectacularly awry, such as Peoples Temple, had healthcare programmes – though the cult ended in total disaster in 1978 when over 900 members committed murder-suicide as a revolutionary gesture at the behest of Jim Jones and his armed guards. It was arguably the most notorious modern cult of all, which gave rise to the expression 'Don't drink the Kool-Aid', meaning 'Don't follow something so blindly', which rather negates the fact a lot of them were forced to their deaths or were extremely hesitant to do Jones' bidding. Yet Peoples Temple promoted racial equality and mixing, seeing racism for the great evil it is. This egalitarianism across racial and class boundaries appealed. In fact, although Jones began as a pastor and the Peoples Temple's roots were founded in Pentecostal teachings, he was more inspired by the principles of socialism and communism, preaching what became labelled 'apostolic socialism'.

Another American cult that went south and became mired in criminality was The Nation of Yahweh. This movement initially earned plaudits among local authorities for transforming Miami's no-go ghettos into safe family neighbourhoods (mostly by intimidating criminals and locals who wouldn't toe the line). However, in 1990 its leader, Yahweh ben Yahweh, was handed an 11-year sentence having been found guilty of conspiracy to commit murder after it was proven in court that he'd ordered several ex-members and others who'd fallen foul of him to be killed. One man was beheaded and discarded in a nearby swamp. Followers attempted to pin all the blame on one of Yahweh's chief goons, ex-American football player Robert Rozier, and to this day many followers argue that their leader was made a patsy by the government, but facts state otherwise.

Heaven's Gate was unknown until its peculiar mass suicide event in 1997. Videotaped footage from inside its Rancho Santa Fe mansion, in the swish suburbs of San Diego, showed deceased members shrouded, lying on bunk beds, all wearing Nike running shoes. Members had recorded videos of themselves detailing their reasons for leaving the bodily realm. In the top pockets of their pyjamas they carried passports and $5 bills. Luggage was packed too, to be collected by the aliens who were taking them beyond the stars. As a millennial cult, Heaven's Gate members believed the arrival of the comet Hale-Bopp signalled their imminent departure from Earth. Over the course of three days, members recorded video statements, went out for pizza and to the movies, returned home, necked vodka and phenobarbital, had plastic bags placed over their heads and were suffocated.

Founded 20 years earlier by ex-mental institute patient Marshall Applewhite, the leader initially preached a wild story about Jesus Christ being an alien known as an 'Older Member' who had come to our planet in the guise of a human to help transport believers to heaven via a space portal (a gate, hence 'Heaven's Gate'). Christ left 2,000 years ago, but come the new millennium, a new Older Member would arise. This spin on the Day of Judgement and Christ's return was reworked as the figure known as 'Do' (a play on John Doe – police lingo for 'unknown male body'). Applewhite was Do.

Heaven's Gate practised isolation as part of its credo. This cutting off from the world included more than just physical seclusion; members had to be celibate, forgo everyday accoutrements of modern life, be selfless and – what is often a staple of the cult structure – disengage from blood relatives.

Another bizarre entry in the deadlier annals of cult movement history is The Order of the Solar Temple, a Swiss-French cult whose leader, Luc Jouret, was obsessed with purification and regeneration by fire. Jouret preached that he was a time traveller who would take followers to a galaxy far, far away for a spot of rebirth and would unite Christianity and Islam. Again, they were an obscure bunch who came to public consciousness in the 1990s following their acts of suicide via self-immolation. Solar Temple members, before seeing themselves off, murdered a baby they believed to be the Antichrist, repeatedly stabbing it in the heart.

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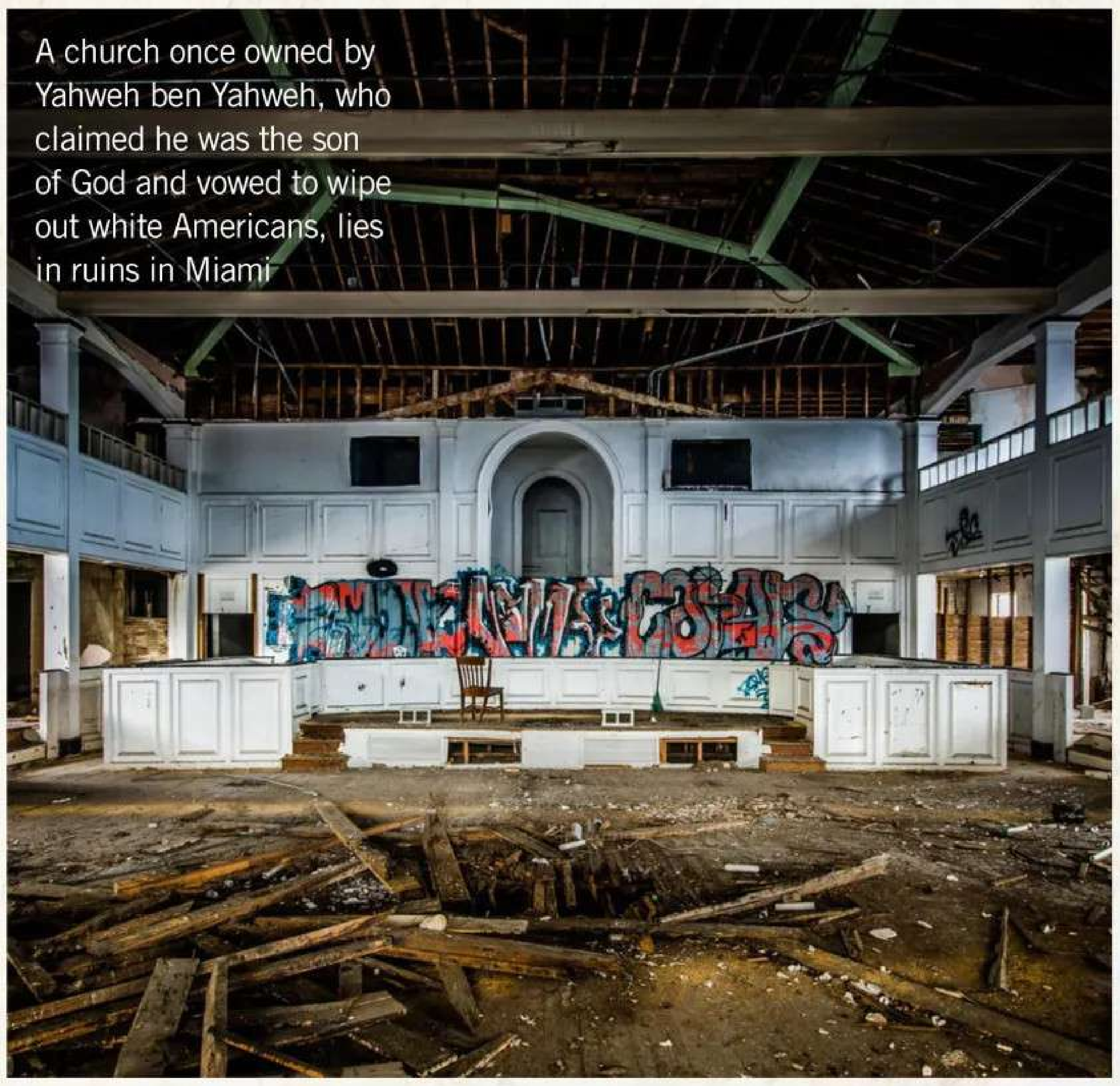


A church once owned by Yahweh ben Yahweh, who claimed he was the son of God and vowed to wipe out white Americans, lies in ruins in Miami

Another cult that ended in mass death was the Peoples Temple led by Reverend Jim Jones. "I've tried my best to give you a good life," Jones says on the recording made during the final hours of the Jonestown community. "In spite of all that I've tried, a handful of our people, with their lies, have made our life impossible. There's no way to detach ourself from what's happened today".

Jonestown began as the most beautiful dream: a multicultural community where people from all walks of life lived in harmony. It was meant to be the living embodiment of John Lennon's *Imagine*. The photos of bodies lying on the ground as if sleeping belied a violent end. Jonestown reached breaking point, and the dream died a spectacularly gruesome death, confounding the whole world and helping to demonise other cults. Judging from photos of the site in the aftermath, where children were murdered, some adults took their own lives and others were shot. It's hard to rationalise. Jonestown and Peoples Temple were destroyed from within as much as by external pressures.

By 1978, its leader, who was addressed as 'Father' by his flock, was a drug-addled, bloated mess. He was also increasingly paranoid – the rigours of jungle life proved more gruelling than a kick-back-in-the-sun paradise. Not that followers thought it would be mojitos on the beach. They knew it would be hard, just not this hard. Disaffection spread, and some wanted out. Jones, who had manipulated members in the past, began running mock suicide drills, known as 'White Nights', and babbling on the compound's PA system at all hours. Something had to give, and when it did the result was devastating.

With the U.S. Congress and disaffected ex-members sounding the alarm, Cold War paranoia, drug addiction and a sincere belief that the Peoples Temple could not live free in this blighted world, Jones became convinced that there was no way forward for the group. The Jonestown tape recording is among the most chilling artefacts left behind, especially when you realise people are literally being murdered or committing suicide in the background as discussions play out. It is a harrowing listen.

Unlike the demise of the Peoples Temple, the end of David Koresh and over 80 Branch Davidians was televised

> “SOLAR TEMPLE MEMBERS, BEFORE SEEING THEMSELVES OFF, MURDERED A BABY THEY BELIEVED TO BE THE ANTICHRIST, REPEATEDLY STABBING IT IN THE HEART”

The group's showdown was brought about by a mixture of governmental posturing, unnecessary violence towards the Branch Davidians, and a power struggle between Koresh and disaffected ex-members, including George Roden, who wanted to wrestle control of Mount Carmel Center back from Koresh. There is no doubt at all that the Branch Davidian leader was a child abuser, philanderer and hypocrite. He was the 'prophet' who enjoyed a beer or two every now and again, played electric guitar and commanded all female members of the sect to sleep with him while ordering the men to be celibate. His reasons for this were tied to his interpretation of scripture, in which his offspring would be a next generation of prophets to lead the world to its salvation when Judgement Day arrived.

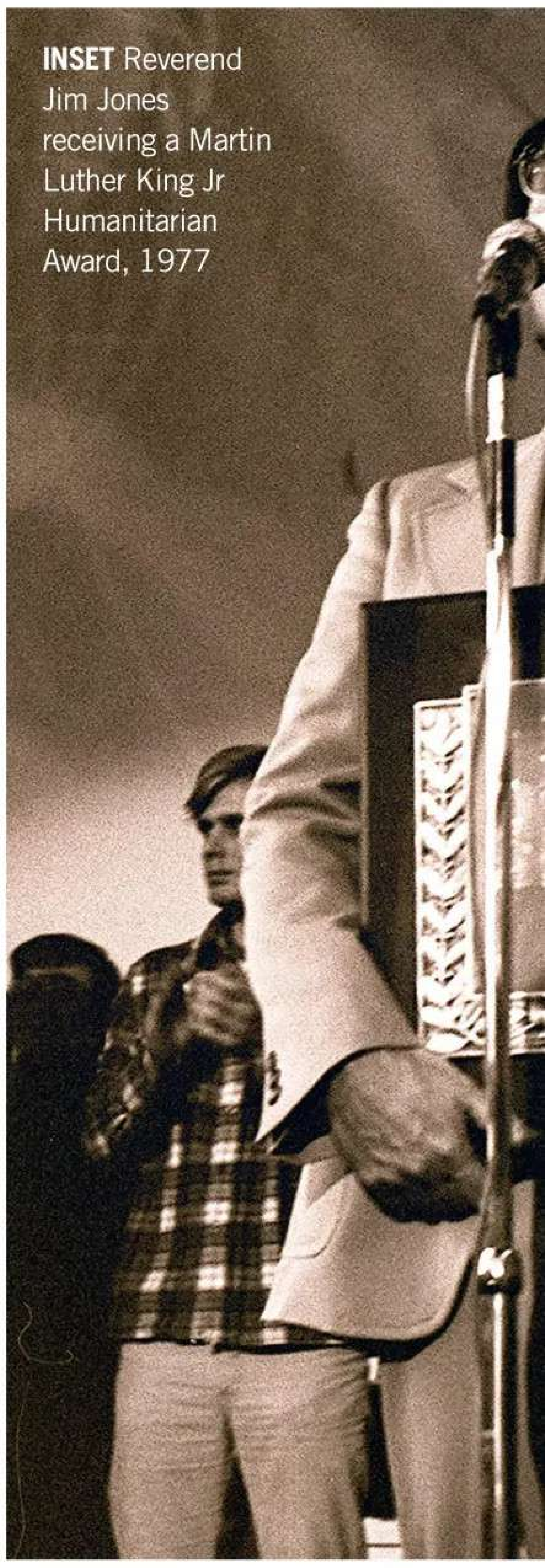
The ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives) got involved when it received a tip-off that Koresh and his group were illegally converting semi-automatic weapons to fully automatic ones. Media speculation added to the fervour that was building. It's true that Koresh earned a crust at gun fairs around Texas selling weapons, and he fixed them for locals, but it's never been fully proven that he was engaged in selling illegal guns.

Child social services had every right to get involved, but the whole sorry drama slowly conflated into catastrophe when the ATF and the FBI turned the Waco siege into a Wild West saga aired on television. The authorities could have arrested Koresh at any point when he left the compound in the run-up to those dreadful days between February and April 1993. There was a host of opportunities to do so. Instead, this struggle ended with 82 men, women and children shot or burned to death in an astonishing display of state-backed aggression. Four ATF agents lost their lives too. Who started the fires may never be known, though it's most likely that the Branch Davidians did, recognising that all was lost and believing the government, in their frazzled and paranoiac view, was coming to kill them.

To outsiders, the behaviour and mentality of cults can be mystifying and immoral. From the inside looking out, these tragedies often occur because leaders get too much power, begin to abuse their authority and genuinely engage in transgressive and illegal behaviour. It is their transgressions that invariably create bad impressions. Sometimes it's fully deserved, but other times we have to recognise and accept that ignorant authorities can pour petrol on the fire when a delicate approach is needed.

Cults often resort to deadly means because they feel that they have been backed into a corner and perceive self-destruction as the only option they have left. Feeding such paranoia will only ever result in tragedy. However, with that being said, not every group can be reasoned with, their faith blinding them to the truth.

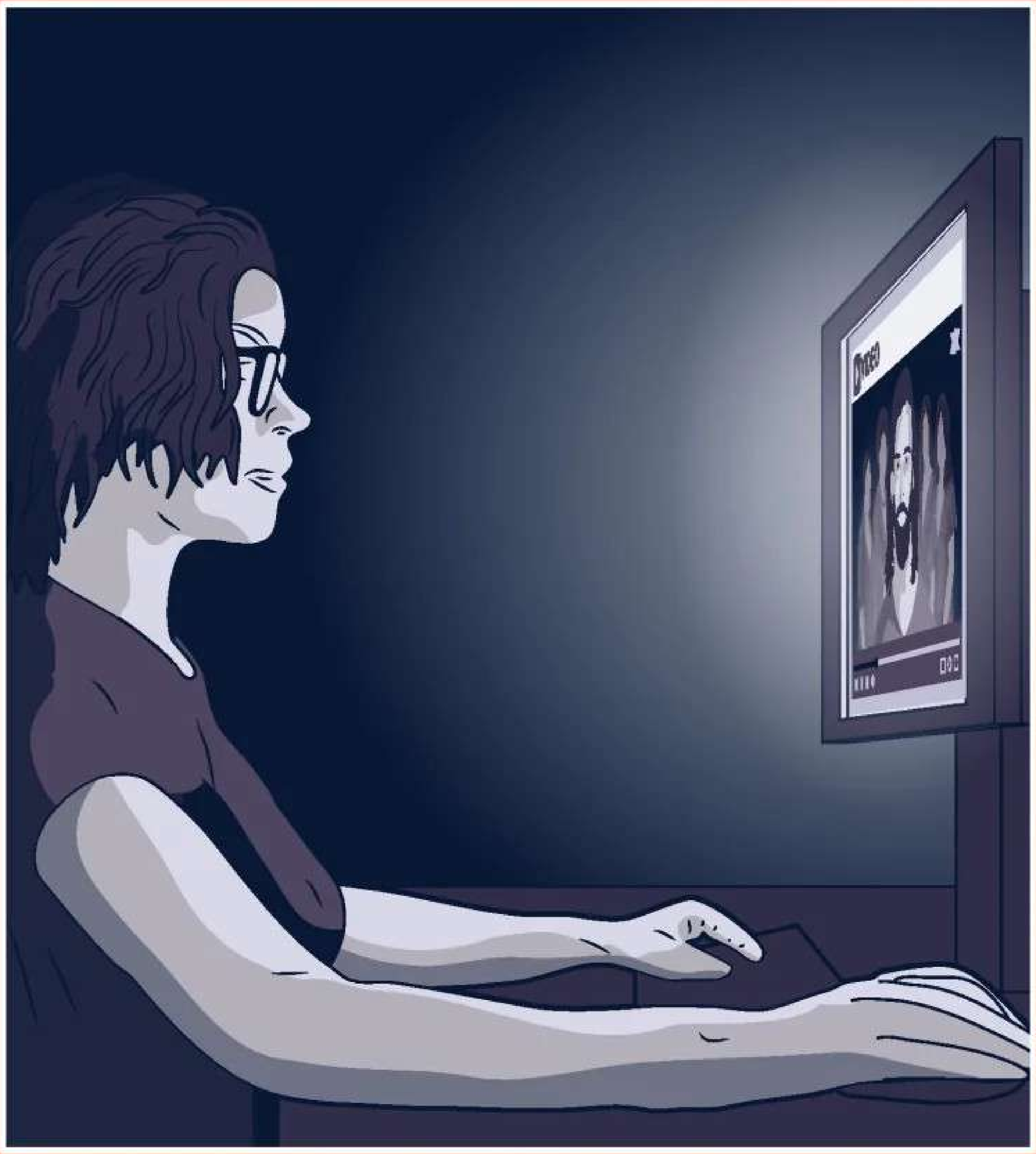
INSET The Branch Davidian compound located in Waco, Texas, on fire in the final hours of the FBI's controversial 50-day siege



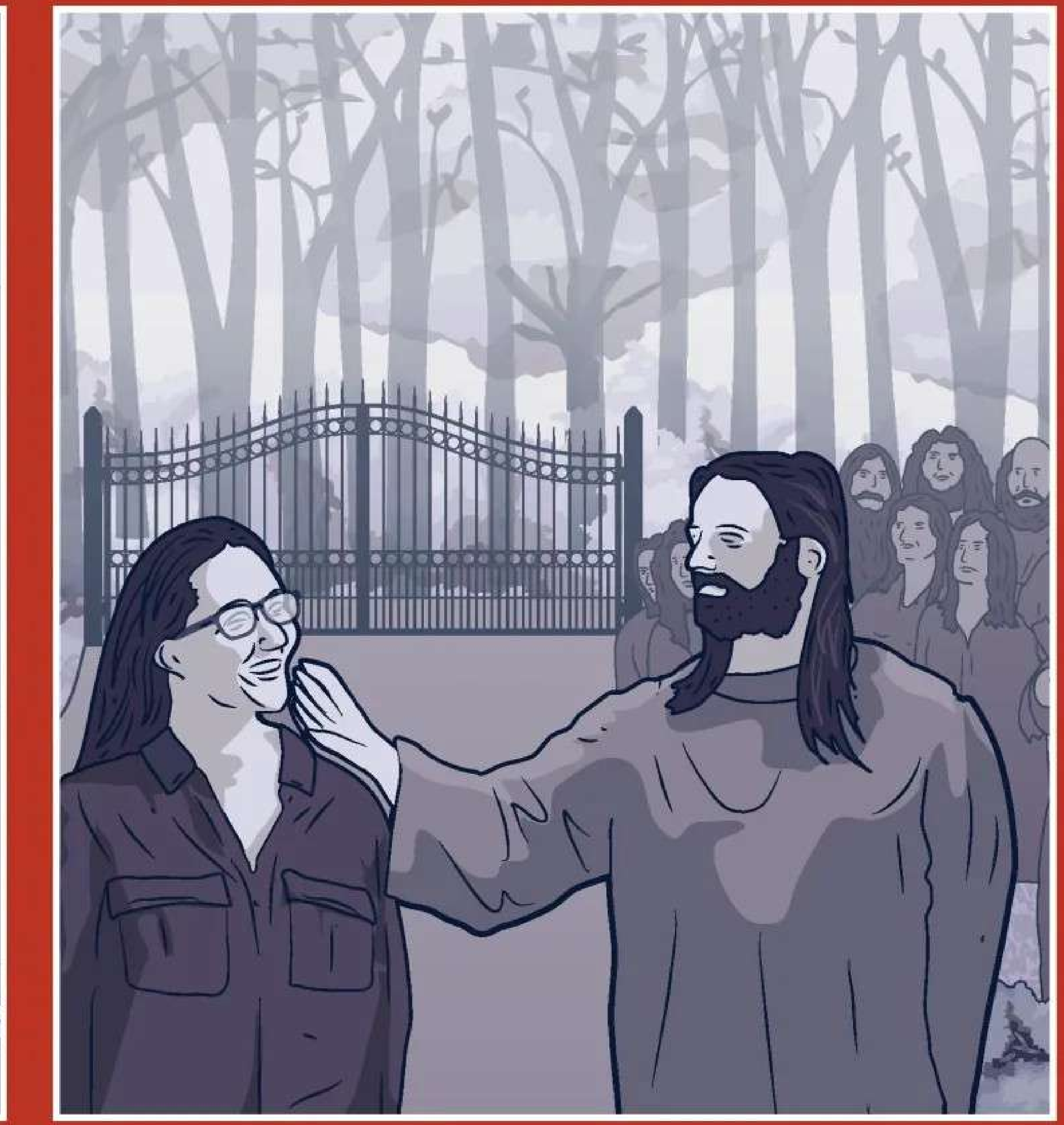
INSET Reverend Jim Jones receiving a Martin Luther King Jr Humanitarian Award, 1977

CULT INDOCTRINATION TECHNIQUES

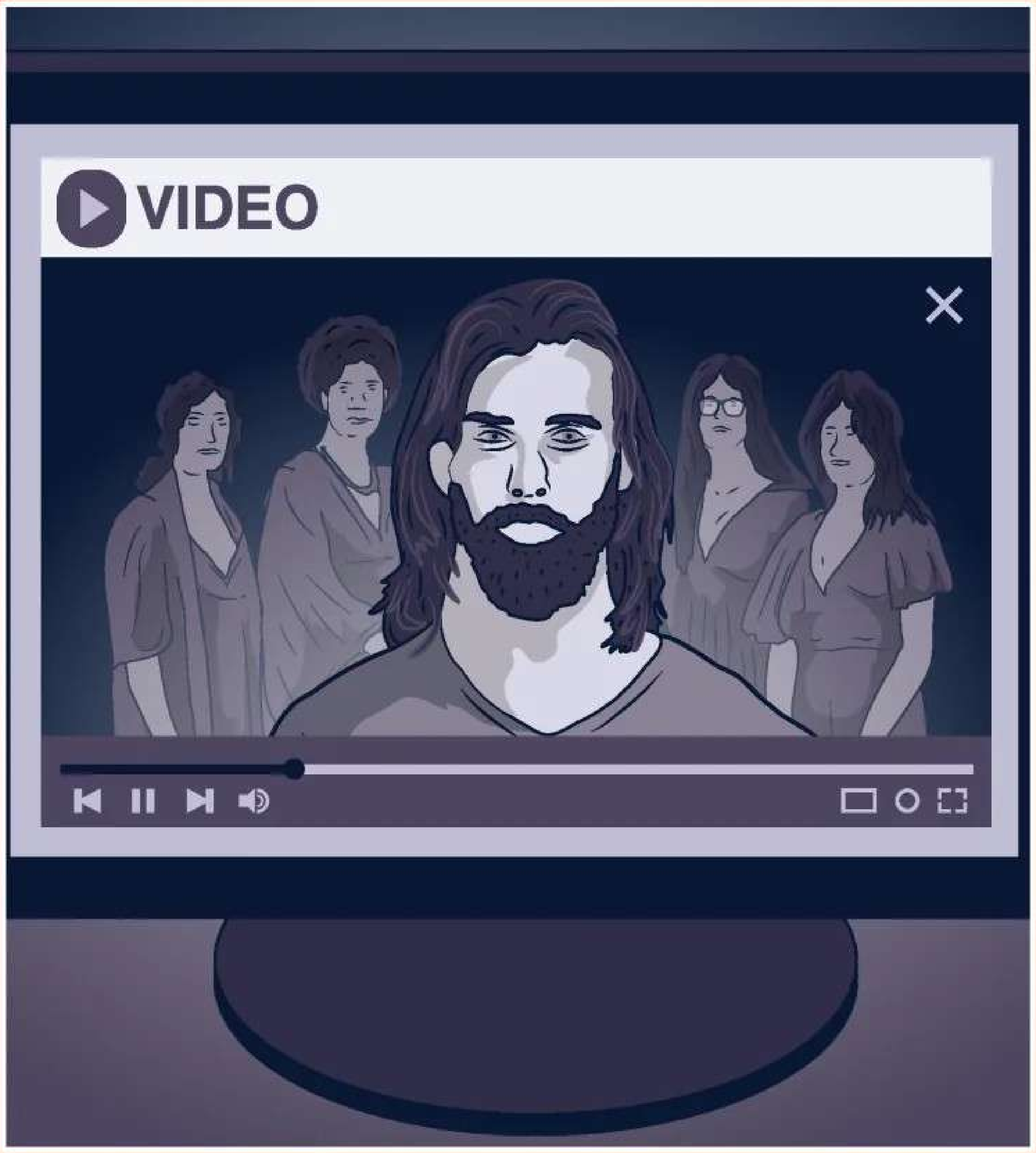
HOW SECTS RECRUIT AND KEEP MEMBERS VARIES. CRITICS, HOWEVER, ACCUSE GROUPS OF USING MIND CONTROL AND OTHER ABUSIVE METHODS



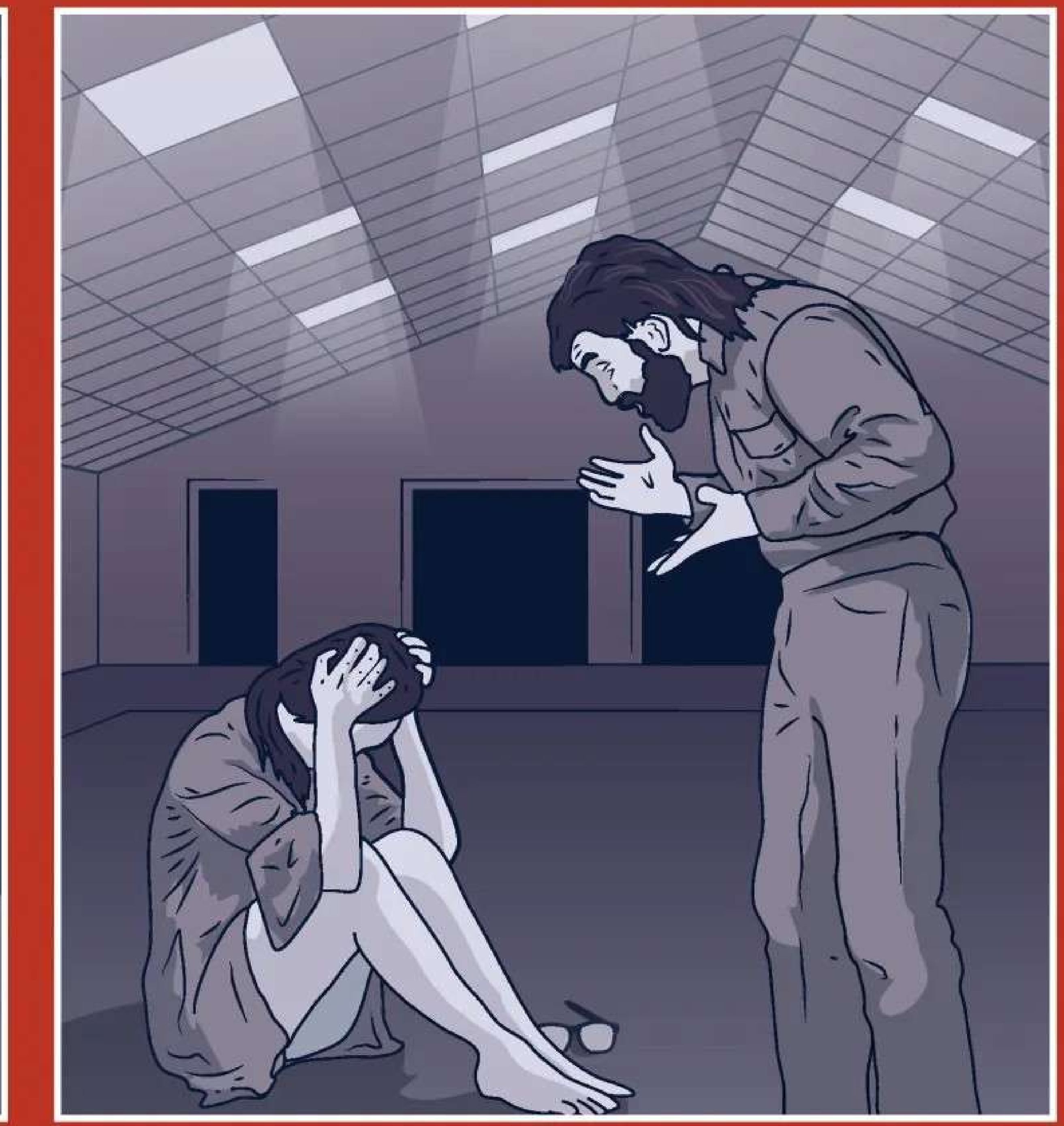
1 DECEIVING NEW MEMBERS
Being in a cult is all happy-clappy good times, right? In promising enlightenment or tantalising approaches to ridding oneself of inner angst, followers might not fully comprehend what being in a sect truly entails: often it means complete devotion and commitment, no part-timers allowed. Once you're in, you're in.



2 ISOLATION AS IDEOLOGY
Cults tend to live in communes away from urban areas. Jim Jones set up Jonestown in the Guyana jungle because he feared nuclear war and persecution. But isolation doesn't always require moving to the middle of nowhere. Scientologists are required to cut non-believers out of their lives forever.



3 DEPENDENCY ON THE CULT
Immersion into cult life means there is no time for anything else. This often makes followers totally dependent on the sect for all of their needs. Critics argue that this turns members into zombie drones who will blindly adhere to the cult's rules and never dare to question those who lead them.



4 THE PRESSURE TO PLEASE
Unrelenting pressure to perform tasks at optimum levels leads to exhaustion. Failure can mean corporal punishment and members being denounced as slackers or not fully committed to the cause. As well as daily physical toil, making monetary contributions can cause followers severe financial difficulties.

Illustrations by: Ed Crooks © Getty Images, Alamy

TICIANVS

THE FIRST FOLLOWERS

18 ROMAN MYSTERY CULTS

Rome's remarkable history may be littered with mighty figures, but few know that many of the city's elite bowed down to far higher powers

24 ANCIENT MOVEMENTS

Since the dawn of man our species has turned to myths and worship to make sense of the mysterious

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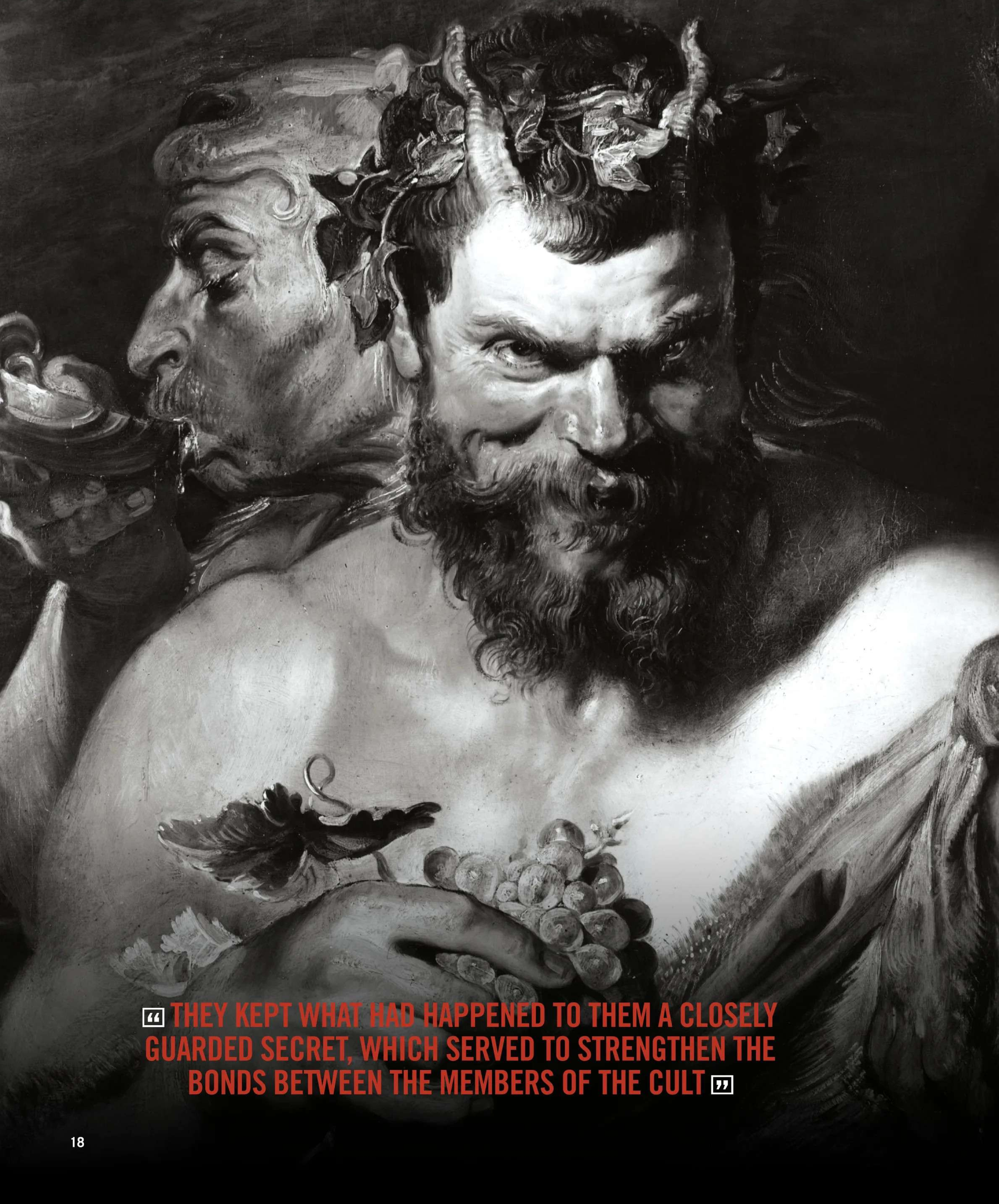


“ THEY KEPT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THEM A CLOSELY GUARDED SECRET, WHICH SERVED TO STRENGTHEN THE BONDS BETWEEN THE MEMBERS OF THE CULT ”

ROMAN MYSTERY CULTS

UNCOVER THE SECRET RITES AND BIZARRE RITUALS OF THE ROMAN SPIRITUAL UNDERWORLD

WORDS **MARC DeSANTIS**

Much of Roman religion was public in nature. It was all-important to the residents of the city to maintain Rome's good relationship with the gods, and this was done through regular sacrifices of oxen and pigs and the maintenance of myriad temples. But behind closed doors, those seeking more intimate contact with the divine threw raucous parties, committed gruesome self-mutilation and performed ritual re-enactments. Known as 'mystery cults', these highly secretive societies spread through the Roman world from the East and became extremely popular.

These societies were dedicated to various gods and typically promised their devotees a happy afterlife. Mystery cults allowed the individual to participate directly in the worship service, and the ceremonies often involved ecstatic dancing and singing. These experiences were intended to be transformative and differed greatly from the more staid rituals.

One of the earliest cults to come to Rome was that of the Magna Mater – the Great Mother. In 204 BCE, during the dark days of the war with Carthage, the Romans became aware of a prophecy they believed was the key to defeating the enemy. They had to seek out the Great Mother's cult image and bring this to Rome from Ida, in the kingdom of Pergamum. Her symbol was a sacred stone, which they brought back to Rome, beginning a long tradition of her worship there. Other borrowings from the East included that of Mithras from Persia. Though Persia had long been an enemy of Rome, Mithras became a popular deity among the Romans, especially with soldiers, officials and merchants of the empire.

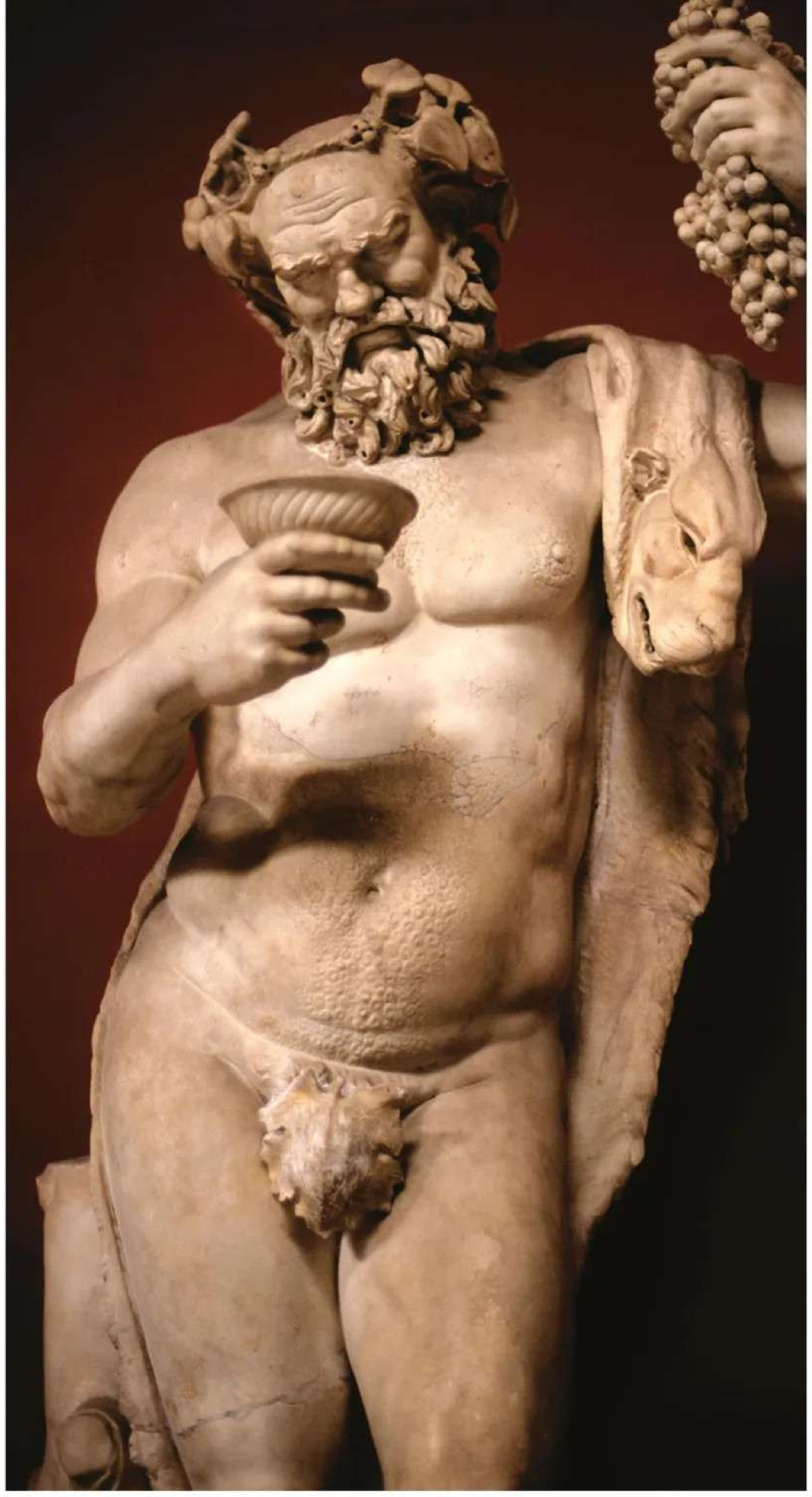
From Egypt in the 2nd century BCE came the cult of the mother goddess Isis, who became beloved across the Roman world, and from the Greeks the Romans learned of Dionysus, whom they called Bacchus – the god of agriculture and wine. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this mystery cult's ecstatic rites included drinking and dancing, liberating its members and inducing a trance-like state.

Another celebrated cult was the Eleusinian Mysteries, which were held at Eleusis in Greece every autumn and had as their foundation the mythological abduction and recovery by Demeter (goddess of agriculture) of her daughter Persephone. Before the religious revelry could begin, however, members of the mystery cults had to be initiated.

INITIATION

At the heart of each Roman mystery religion was the mysterium, a closely kept secret rite or point of theology. To gain knowledge of this 'mystery' a person had to undergo the process of initiation. This was entirely voluntary; no one was compelled to join a mystery cult or take part in its ceremonies. The purpose of the initiation ritual was to bring the individual – the initiate – into direct contact with a deity through an intense and unforgettable sensual experience. This ecstatic experience was not meant to be explained but felt. Afterwards, they kept what had happened to them a closely guarded secret, which served to strengthen the bonds between the members of the cult.

Initiation into the Bacchanalia, the cult of Bacchus, involved joining a group of Bacchic worshippers and dancing with them in the mountains. Most of these were women, called Bacchants. Some might also have private initiation, and in this case an initiate could be forced to abstain from food



ABOVE The Bacchus (Dionysian) Mysteries caused scandal in Rome, but this did not stop figures like Mark Antony from becoming patrons

RIGHT Roman mythology borrowed heavily from the Greeks, resulting in many gods, heroes and stories getting a Roman makeover

for ten days. Then came a period of feasting, after which they would ritually bathe as a form of purification. Only then were they allowed to enter into a shrine of Bacchus.

For the followers of Isis, known as the Lady of the Mysteries, the initiation ritual was similar to that of Bacchus. Her initiates bathed and were thus purified. They then abstained from food for ten days before embarking on several days of feasting. The wearing of ceremonial robes also featured in the initiation, as well as the viewing of sacred hieroglyphs. The promise of life after death was part of the attraction of this benevolent goddess.

For those who wished to take part in the Eleusinian Mysteries, which continued on in Greece throughout the Roman imperial period, an initiate was made to take part in the so-called Lesser Mysteries that were held each spring in Athens, which was nearby to Eleusis. This initiation process involved sacrifices, ritual purification, fasting and the singing of hymns.

The Great Mother was a figure representing the elemental feminine in its fertility aspect. Magna Mater's male priests, the Galli, were eunuchs, castrating themselves in order to be initiated into her priesthood. This extreme act was inspired by the myth that her lover, the god Attis, had done the same. Unlike the other mystery cults, Mithraism accepted only men into its mysteries.

There were seven grades of Mithras's cult, and each of the seven corresponded to one of the known planets of the day. Each grade also had its own rites of initiation. In one, the naked and blindfolded initiate, his hands tied behind him, was made to kneel. Two other men stood beside him as part of the ceremony. A sword was pointed at him, and then he was made to lie prone on the floor. He then had to wear a crown and lie flat on the ground. Another initiation ritual involved shooting an arrow, thereby re-enacting a story from the life of Mithras in which the god launched an arrow into a rock, causing water to flow from it.

RITES

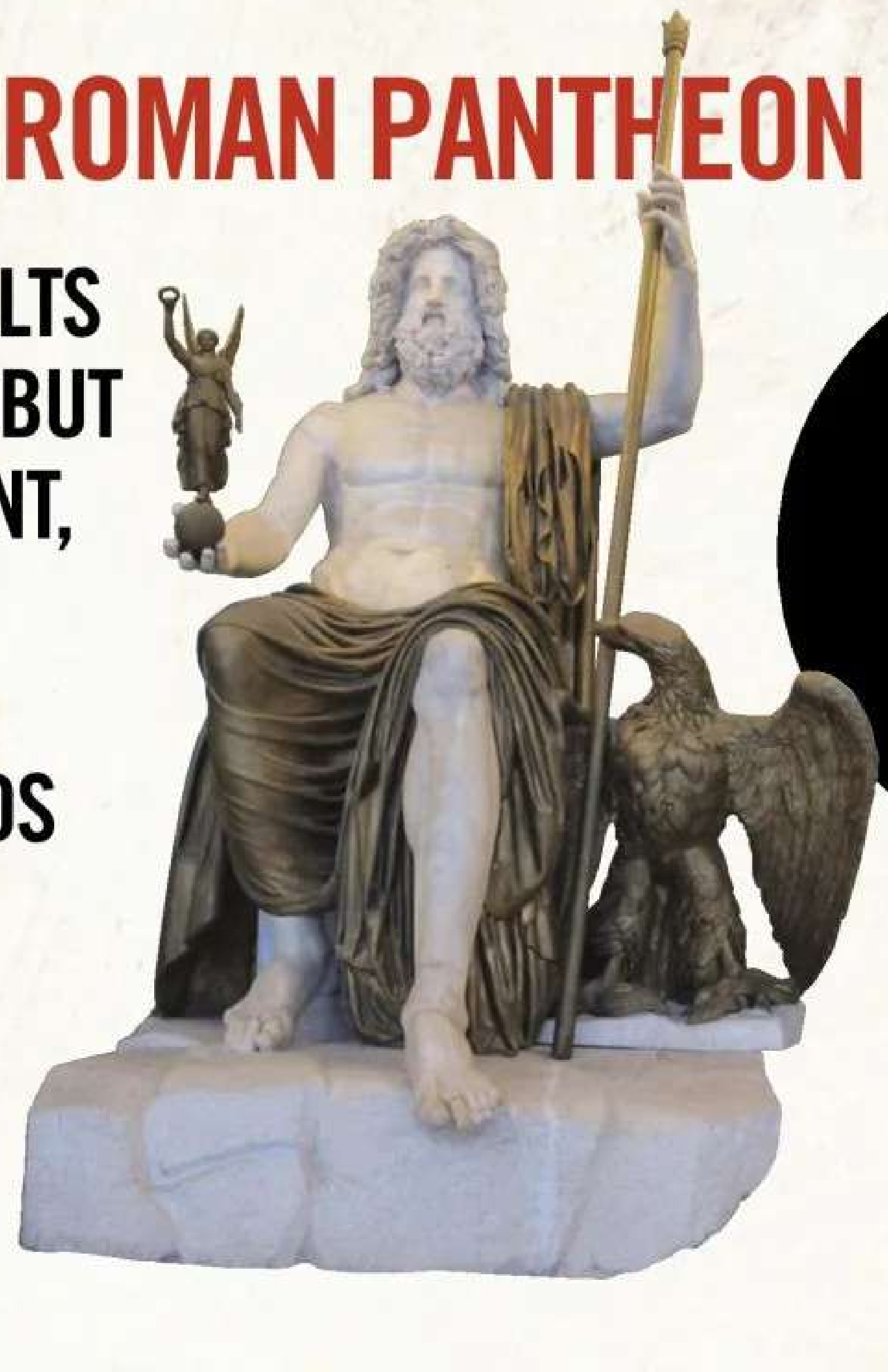
The cult of the Magna Mater was popular all over the ancient world, and she was known by many names, including Rhea, Demeter and especially Cybele, the great goddess of Phrygia, whose cult image the Romans brought to Rome. She was the mother of not just all of the gods but of all humanity too. Her rites in Rome maintained the link between the goddess and her original homeland in Asia Minor. Her sanctuary, set on the Vatican Hill, was known as the Phrygianum, and the leader of her cult was known as the Phrygian High Priest. There was an annual festival in Rome held in her honour, which ran for seven days and included races in the circus. Rites included dancing and music, with the playing of flutes, cymbals, horns and tambourines, and priests would slash themselves with knives while performing an ecstatic dance. Their flowing blood symbolically ensured the fertility of the world.

One particularly dramatic ritual of Magna Mater that may have occurred was the taurobolium – a baptism in bull's blood. A pit was dug and wooden planks were placed over it. Next, a man lowered himself into the pit, and a bull was led onto the planks. The animal was then impaled by a spear, and its blood was allowed to run down through the spaces between the planks, spilling onto the man below. Once the bull had been drained of its blood the man emerged, ritually purified for 20 years by the power of the Great Mother, acting through the bull's blood. This account comes from a Christian source and is considered anachronistic, and many historians believe that the blood was actually carefully collected into vessels instead.

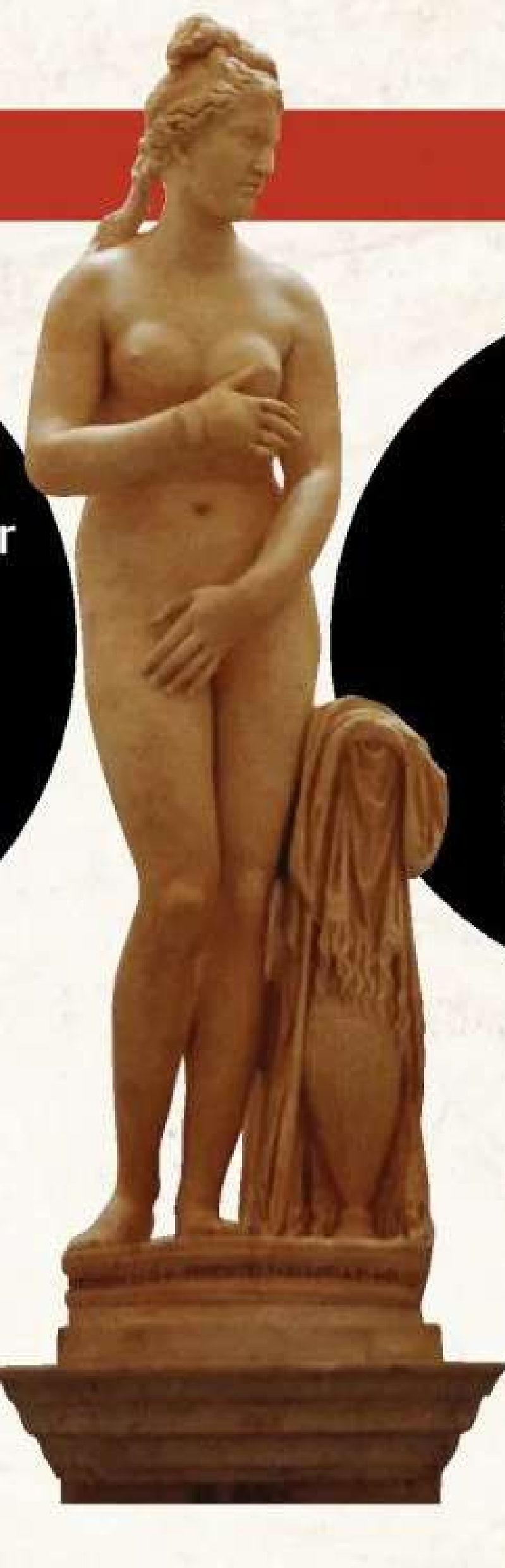
The Egyptian goddess Isis shared much in common with the Great Mother, as they were seen as mistresses of life and

INSIDE THE ROMAN PANTHEON

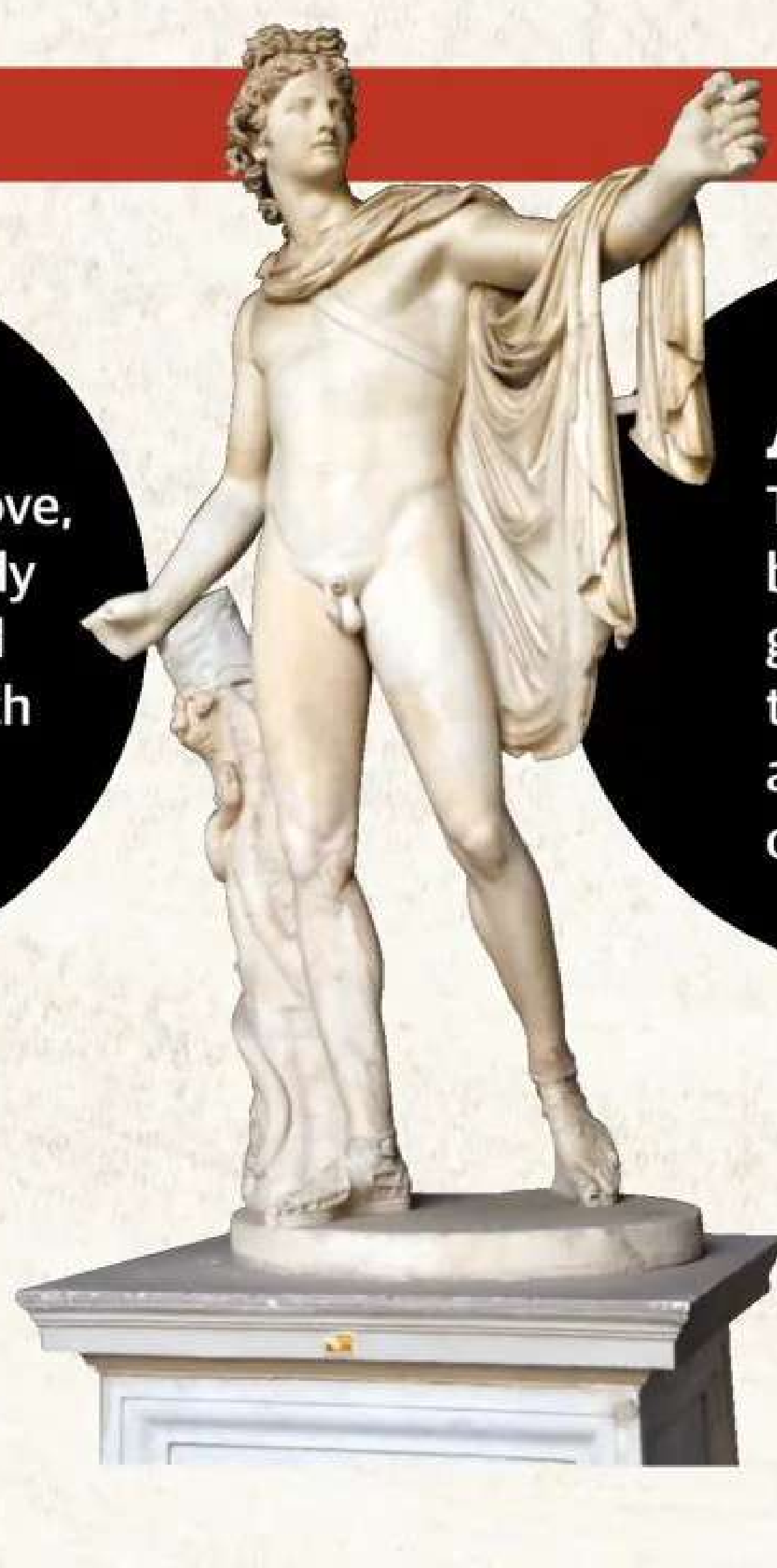
THE MYSTERY CULTS SUPPLEMENTED, BUT DID NOT SUPPLANT, THE ROMANS' BELIEF IN THEIR TRADITIONAL GODS



Jupiter
God of the sky, Jupiter was the greatest of the gods. He was the husband of Juno and the father of many gods and heroes.



Venus
The goddess of love, she was irresistibly beautiful and had several affairs with gods as well as mortal men.



Apollo
The son of Jupiter by Leto was the god of music and the Sun. He was also the brother of Diana.

TALISMANS AND TRINKETS

THE ROMANS ENCOUNTERED THEIR GODS EVERYWHERE – IN THE HOME AND ON THE ROAD

The Roman home was protected by a guardian spirit, and these were known as lares. These were ancestral family spirits that watched over the household of its descendants. These tutelary gods stood at the centre of the family's religious life. A shrine containing a statuette of the spirit was set beside the hearth, and each morning they were greeted with prayers. At festival time the lares were offered food. Outside the home, lares were thought to watch over the crossroads where the family's fields met another's. As such, they came to be known as the gods of travellers too.

Another group of guardian spirits, known as penates, were the gods that protected the food pantry of a Roman household and also watched over the family as a whole. Said to have been brought to Rome from Troy by the hero Aeneas, these spirits were worshiped at the hearth of the home, where a fire was always kept lit in their honour. At meal times, the family sacrificed a bit of food to their household penates. In addition to the domestic lares and penates, there were also public spirits that watched over the Roman state.

fertility. Her rites guaranteed a blissful afterlife for participants. The theme of these ceremonies was the ritual re-enactment of the death and resurrection of her husband, Osiris. Osiris reborn also symbolised the rebirth of nature in springtime. A dead person might be summoned back to the realm of the living with the words, "Raise yourself to life: you do not die!" and "Osiris live! Stand up, unhappy one who dost lie there! I am Isis!" Just as Isis raised Osiris from the dead, so would the dead worshipper be raised again to life.

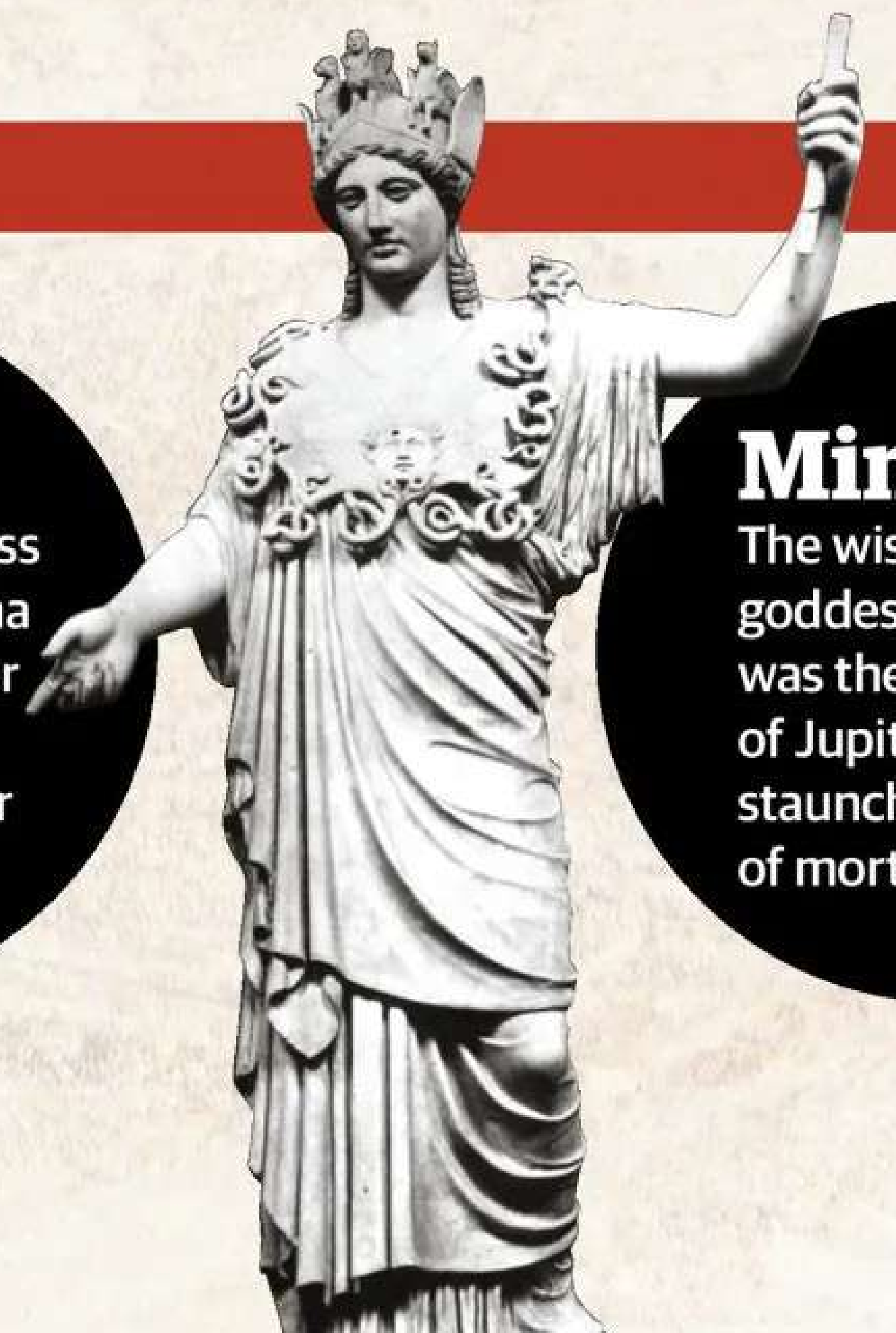
Like Magna Mater and Isis, Demeter was a mother goddess, and her mysteries at Eleusis commemorated her search for her daughter Persephone, or Kore, the maiden in Greek mythology. Carried off by Hades, Kore was held captive in the Underworld. The inconsolable Demeter roamed the Earth searching for her. Crops would not grow and plague and death stalked the world. So bad did things become that Zeus himself was forced to intervene and secure Kore's freedom. But because she had eaten pomegranate seeds while in Hades' realm, she was forced ever after to spend a third of the year there as his consort. Kore's time in the Underworld is thus one of great sadness for her mother, and during this time, the season of winter, nothing grows upon Earth. With the arrival of spring, Demeter is reunited with her daughter and life returns to the earth.

Once an initiate had been inducted into the Lesser Mysteries, he or she was allowed to take part in the Greater Mysteries, which took place over several days of sacrifices, purification and fasting. The precise elements of the mysteries themselves are not known to historians today, but they seem to have included music, dancing and a re-enactment of the abduction and recovery of Persephone. The most dramatic part of the mysteries seems to have been a vision beheld by the participant of something in the brightest of light.

Mithras was in origin a god associated with truth and a lieutenant of the primary Zoroastrian deity, Ahura Mazda.

BELOW This Roman masks depicts a smiling Dionysus

Diana
A maiden goddess of the hunt, Diana was the daughter of Jupiter by Latona and sister to Apollo.



Minerva
The wise warrior goddess Minerva was the daughter of Jupiter and a staunch patroness of mortal heroes.

Vulcan
Vulcan, son of Jupiter, was the smith of the gods, producing wondrous items in his forge. His wife was Venus.

Vesta
Goddess of the hearth, Vesta watched over the fire of the Roman household. She was the sister of Jupiter.

Once it came into the Roman world, Mithraism was a heavily changed religion that now viewed Mithras as a saviour god. The rites of his cult echoed the origin myth of Mithras, who was said to have been hewn from a rock. Ahura Mazda had created first a wild bull, and Mithras wrestled it and hauled it into a cave. The bull escaped, but Mithras tracked it down and slew it with a dagger thrust to its throat. Life then flowed from the gushing blood of the bull.

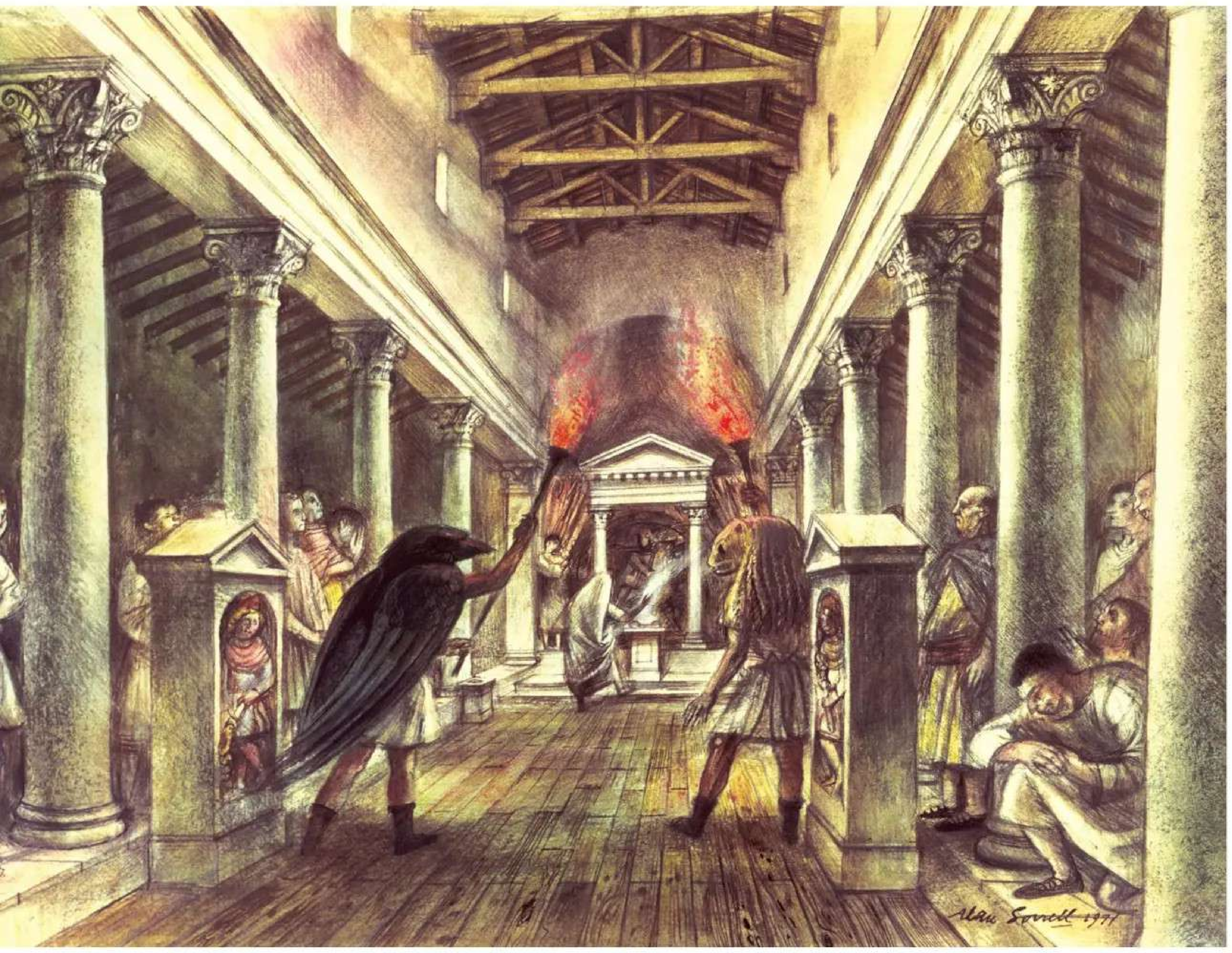
Mithraists would convene their worship meetings in underground chapels, which they called caves, where they shared communal meals of wine and bread. The goal of Mithraism was to purify the immortal soul, making it ready for a return to the realm of light upon death of the individual.

SUPPRESSION

Romans did not universally approve of mystery cults, even if they undeniably achieved widespread popularity and won many adherents. Even some emperors joined the societies, not least among them Emperor Domitian (who reigned from 81-96 CE) who was initiated into the mysteries of Isis, and Emperor Gallienus (who reigned from 260268), who became an initiate of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

One Roman traditionalist – the 1st-century BCE historian Livy – would write in horror that during Bacchic mysteries, “Matrons dressed as bacchants with their hair dishevelled, would run to the Tiber with burning torches, and plunge the torches into the water, then bring them up again still alight as live sulphur was mixed with calcium. Men were said to be abducted by the gods, when they were tied to machines and carried out of sight into hidden caves.” Not least, Livy seems to have feared the mysteries as excuses for all sorts of sexual licence between the male and female initiates. To some extent, the intense insistence upon secrecy logically, if unintentionally, induced anxiety among the uninitiated of Roman society.

> “ CONSTANTINE’S VICTORY OVER HIS RIVAL MAXENTIUS AT THE BATTLE OF MILVIAN BRIDGE IN 312 LED HIM TO MAKE CHRISTIANITY A LEGAL RELIGION UNDER IMPERIAL LAW ”



BELOW An artist’s impression of the interior of a Temple of Mithras. Note the shrines and costumes used in the ceremonies

Constantine’s victory over his rival Maxentius at the Battle of Milvian Bridge in 312 (prior to which Constantine claimed to have had a vision that convinced him to fight for the Christian God) led him to make Christianity a legal religion under imperial law in the next year in the Edict of Milan. Christians increased in number and power as the 4th century progressed. The legal position of paganism, which the mystery cults were part of, began to deteriorate as Christianity became the most powerful religion in the empire. Still, the practice of mystery religions did not disappear quickly. Even in the latter half of the 4th century prominent Romans would proudly acknowledge having been initiated into the mysteries of various cults. However, towards the end of the century, in 391, Emperor Theodosius I forbade the worship of pagan gods in Rome as well as visits to their temples. In the following year he outlawed the practice of all pagan religions whatsoever.

Other forces would also act to bring about the end of mystery religions. In c.395, the Goths attacked and destroyed the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis. The sanctuary was never to be repaired, bringing an end to the cult mysteries held there since at least the 6th century BCE.

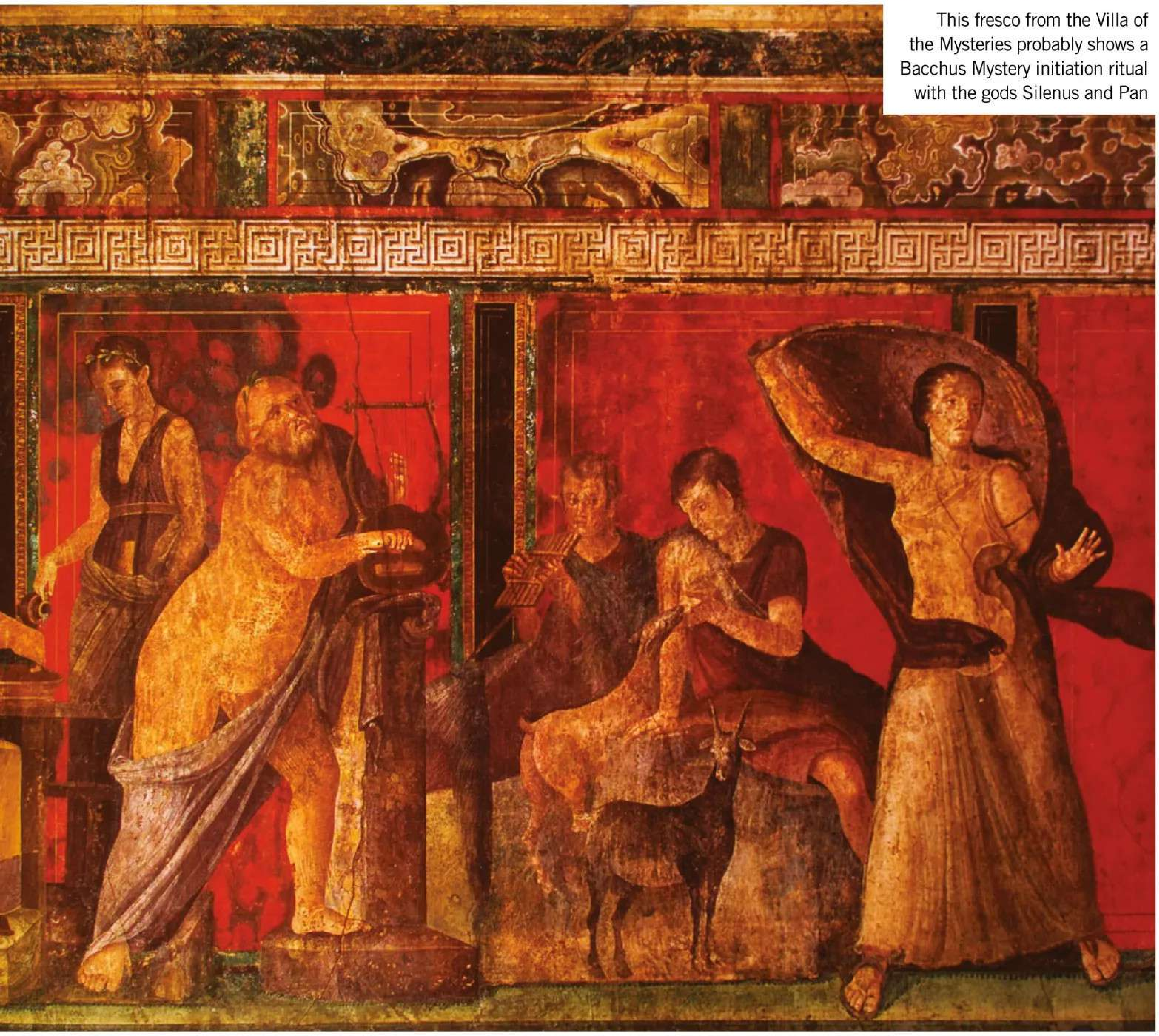
Paganism would hold on in diminished form for many years. There were still enough adherents that Saint Augustine saw the need to compose his City of God to rebut the allegation, put forward by Rome’s remaining pagans, that the neglect of the old gods had led to the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410. The overall trend, however, was for mystery religions to fade away as the ancient world changed and the Middle Ages began.

Neptune
The trident-wielding Neptune was lord of the sea and the younger brother of Jupiter.

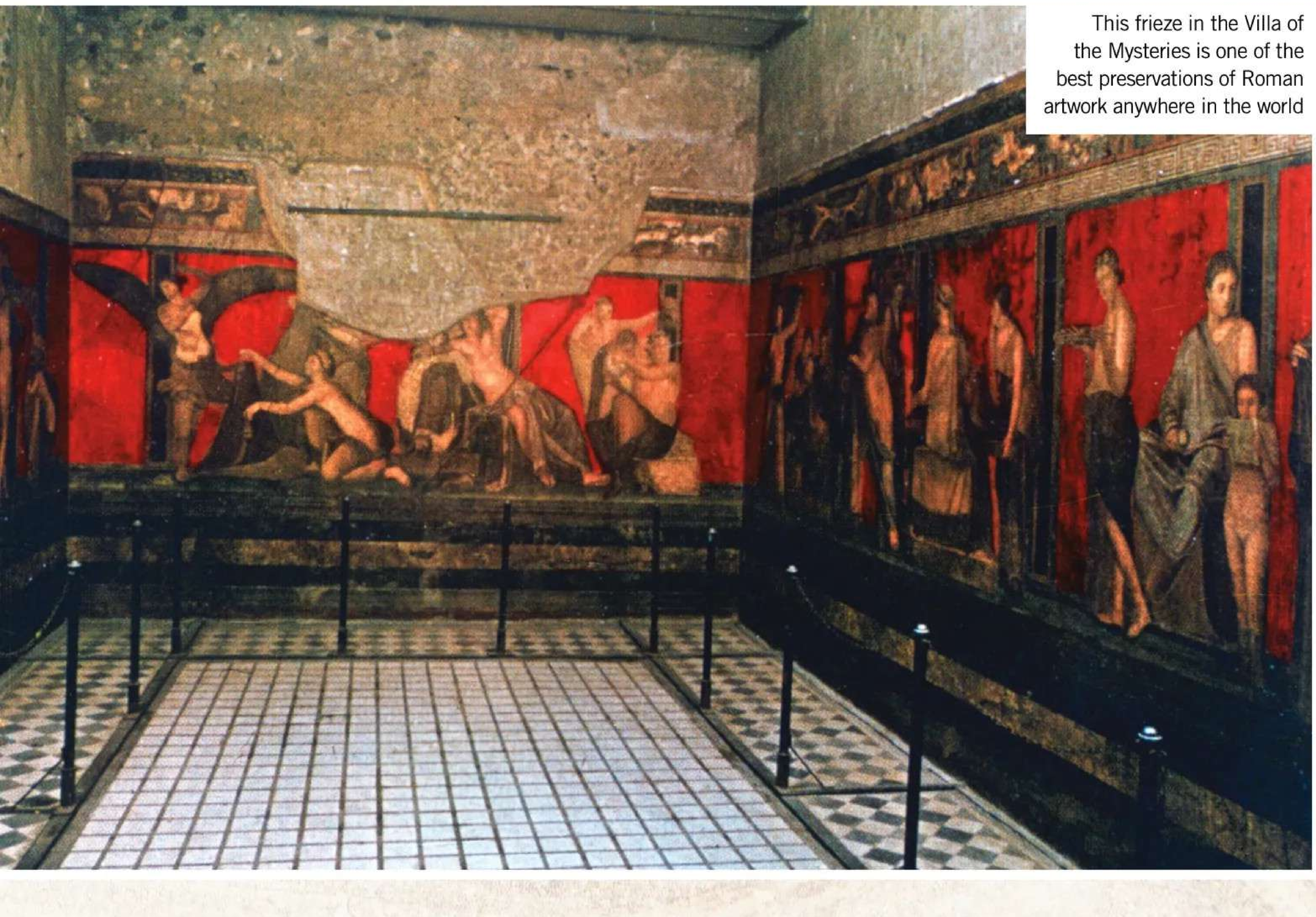
Mars
Mars was the honoured god of war among the military-minded Romans, second only to Jupiter in their estimation.

Mercury
The fleet-footed messenger of Jupiter, Mercury conducted the spirits of the dead to the Underworld.

Ceres
Goddess of the earth and all growing things, Ceres was patroness of fertility and sister to Jupiter.



This fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries probably shows a Bacchus Mystery initiation ritual with the gods Silenus and Pan



This frieze in the Villa of the Mysteries is one of the best preservations of Roman artwork anywhere in the world

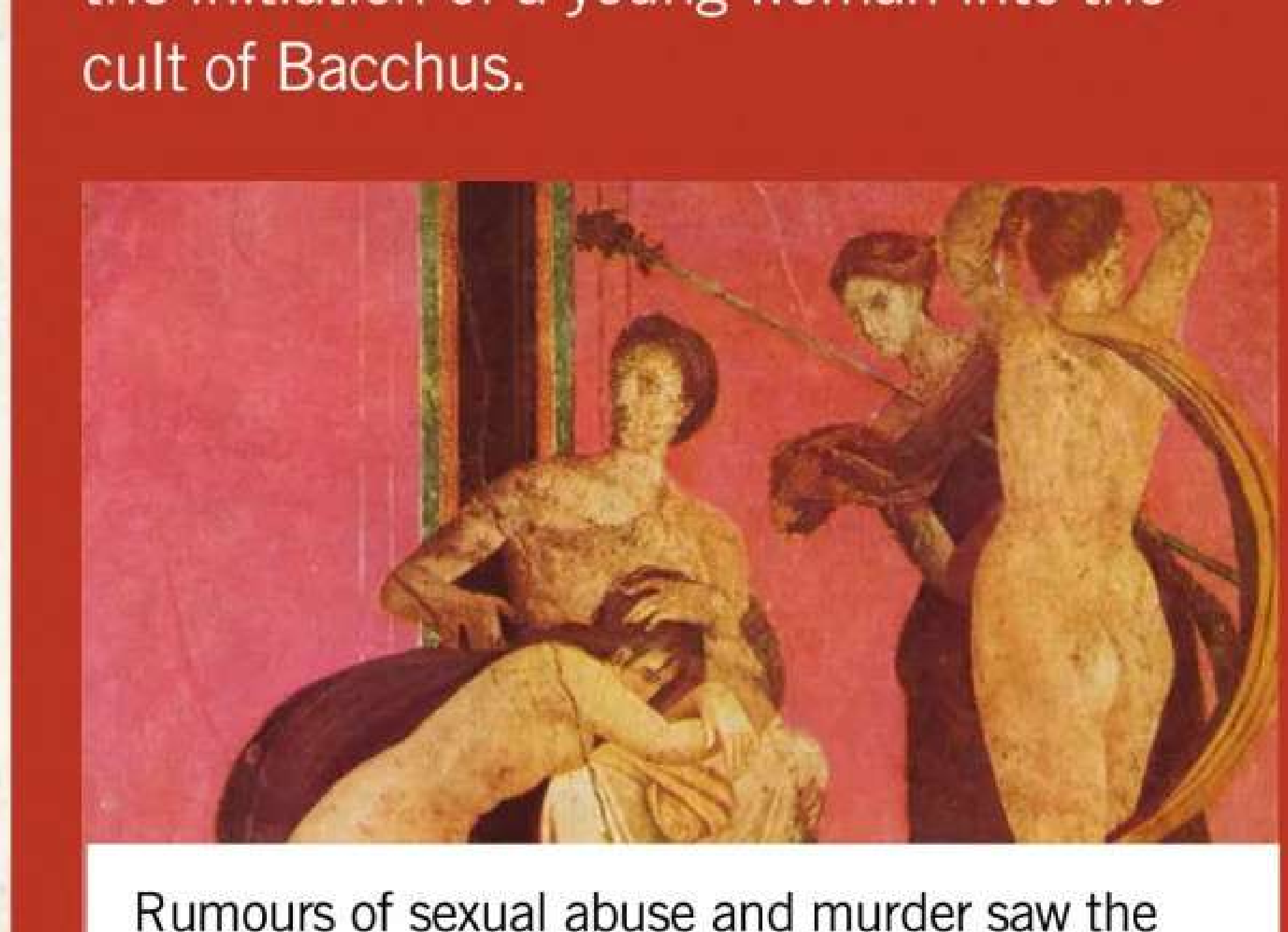
VILLA OF THE MYSTERIES

BURIED FOR CENTURIES IN ASH, THE VILLA OF THE MYSTERIES IN POMPEII IS A WINDOW ON TO THE MYSTERY WORSHIP OF ANCIENT TIMES

The mystery cult of Bacchus (Dionysus) found great favour in Rome and elsewhere in Italy. However, rare is the case where we can see how the mysteries of his cult, or that of any other god for that matter, were celebrated by adherents. We are fortunate then to have the Villa of the Mysteries, a home that was preserved from the ravages of time, ironically, by the ravages of the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

In 79 CE, the nearby southern Italian town of Pompeii was buried completely by volcanic ash and forgotten. It lay undisturbed until its rediscovery in the 18th century. Within the villa is a room with painted friezes along its walls that depict the mystery worship of Bacchus in glorious colour and remarkable detail. These are arguably the most famous paintings of the Roman world still in existence. Running for about 20 metres around the room, the friezes show a number of individual figures at roughly human size of gods, men, women and mythological beings engaged in the cultic worship of Bacchus.

Interpreting the scenes is difficult, as much of their context has been lost. A damaged painting of Bacchus and his consort, Ariadne, would have been the first to be viewed when entering the room. In one scene, a plump Silenus plays a lyre; in another, a youthful Pan plays his flute. In one, a woman rests her head on the lap of another while a winged woman strikes her with a rod. Next to them both dances a woman playing cymbals. It is most likely that the friezes inside the room depicted the initiation of a young woman into the cult of Bacchus.



Rumours of sexual abuse and murder saw the Bacchus Mystery outlawed for a time

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ANCIENT MOVEMENTS

CULTS IN ANCIENT TIMES SPRANG FROM PEOPLE ATTEMPTING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD

WORDS **MARTYN CONTERIO**

Before the great Abrahamic religions began to dominate the lives of human beings in the period after the fall of the Roman Empire and into the present day, those living in ancient times all around the world sort to explain their fragile existence, dangerous environments, natural but puzzling phenomena and accompanying mysteries of life by worshipping a vast range of deities and idols.

Devotees back then would not have understood the term 'cult' as we generally use it today, considered to have inherently negative connotations, to mean an errant or sinister religious belief system that has strayed from acceptable norms. But we may retroactively apply 'cult' to understand bygone fads and trends, to do our best to – factoring in the great expanse of time and the fog of history – examine how and why certain notions took hold. Icons were formed, rituals developed, narratives created. Shamans then priests became figureheads, said to be possessors of secret knowledge. Cults revered specific things: the Sun, the Moon, a variety of animals, and sometimes human sacrifices were made in order to appease and please the invisible gods.

From Babylon to Egypt to Greece to Mesoamerica, from earlier still – Stone Age cave paintings – a rich variety of creation myths, rituals and forms of worship were undertaken. It all served to satisfy a deep need in humans, with cycles of life and death dominating then as they dominate today; our search for enlightenment, our quest for knowledge, our thirst for devotion – it is hard-wired into us as a species. As then, we seek to explain life on Earth and we continue to struggle to accept our mortality. While ancient gods have fallen in and out of fashion, this need to believe in a higher mystical omnipotent power has remained.

The hunter-gatherers from thousands of years ago left behind primitive displays of art. Animals were treated with reverence and wonder as much as provided a food source. In France's southwest, along the Ardèche river, cave drawings, created using mineral pigments, were dated to around 17,000 years ago. These evocative depictions of animals included species extinct today, such as aurochs (a type of cattle). The Hall of the Bulls is the most famous chamber, showcasing an animal who would appear time and time again as a figure of cultic idolatry.

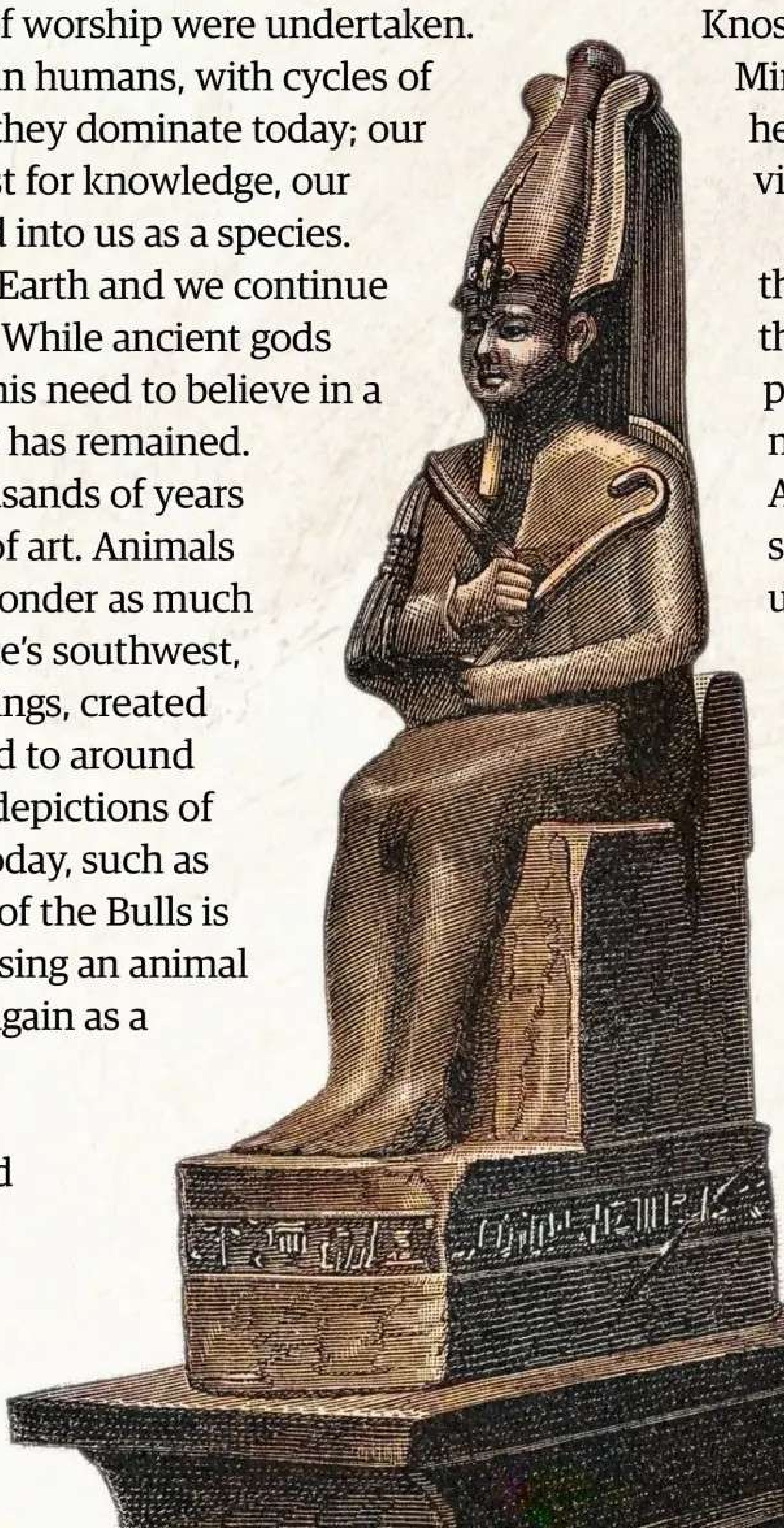
The Assyrians of Mesopotamia worshipped the tree. They assigned sacred attributes related to fertility and renewal (a key theme in many early cults, across continents and centuries). At Nimrud, today situated south of Mosul, Iraq, archaeologists uncovered entire walls of staterooms festooned with murals depicting mighty kings kneeling beneath a stylised tree.

In circa 1900 BCE, a cult of the dead arose on the banks of the Upper Nile, north of Thebes. Followers held the figure of Osiris in adoration, part of the pantheon of Egyptian polytheistic traditions. Osiris was the god of nature and the underworld. According to mythology, Osiris was slain by his own brother Set, who hacked his brother into 14 pieces. The Cult of the Dead partook in an elaborate festival, involving boat processions, wooden altars and statues made of gold, which stopped at the reported murder site of their god. Followers believed Osiris judged adherents upon their deaths and hoped he would grant them a rebirth in the afterlife.

At Knossos, on the island of Crete, a cult worshipped the bull. This animal, which usually represented strength and virility, in this context appeared to symbolise the power of the Sun or Moon (the cult essentially were Sun or lunar worshippers). In the royal palace, sculptures and murals exhibited their veneration for the bull in striking fashion. Knossos is famous too as the lurking place of the Minotaur, the monster with the human body and head of the bull, which has since become iconic via Greek mythology.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, in Mesoamerica, in the country today known as Mexico, cults from the earliest times right up to the Middle Ages practised human sacrifice. Their gods demanded not just devotion but blood in kind. The later Aztecs famously partook in acts of human sacrifice as their belief system and foundational understanding of the world resided in the gods using their own blood to create the world and therefore the blood of the sacrificed was seen as a debt payment in return. High priests of the ancient Zapotec people, located in the region of Oaxaca, also incorporated human sacrifice into their practices. The lightning god Cocijo and the god of light Coquihani were venerated in particular.

Religious movements and what we might today label cults can come in many forms, but they certainly aren't a new phenomena.



INSET The famous cave paintings in Chauvet, France, date back over 30,000 years

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

28 THE 'FAMILY' FROM HELL

In his own words, Charles Manson was nobody, and yet this magnetic madman was able to construct a 'family' of his own and twist it to his bloodsoaked will, with devastating results

36 TWO NIGHTS OF HORROR

It's an early August night in LA and all is quiet. And then the screaming starts…

46 EYEWITNESS TO CIELO DRIVE

Journalist and author Ivor Davis was one of the first reporters on the scene in the wake of the brutal Hollywood slayings that would stun the world

© Getty Images

THE 'FAMILY'

MOST FAMILIES HAVE THE OCCASIONAL BLACK SHEEP, SOMEONE THEY WOULD RATHER FORGET EXISTED, BUT WITH MANSON'S CLAN, THE ENTIRE FAMILY CAME STRAIGHT FROM HELL ITSELF

WORDS **JOANNA ELPHICK**

When Charles Manson finally passed away in 2017, his *New York Times* obituary described him as the "wild-eyed leader of a murderous crew". On the surface, it appears the world is, and always has been, obsessed with the depraved ring leader Charlie, but it could be argued that the real interest lies not with Manson, but with his minions. At 157 centimetres (five-feet two-inches) tall, the small-time criminal and failed musician would be nothing but a footnote in the annals of criminal history if it hadn't been for his uncanny capacity to hypnotise and mesmerise and for the outrageous entourage he acquired as a result.

The images of the staring psychopath captured like a wild beast in chains that flooded the media during his trial are indeed shocking, but the feral hippies who were rounded up at the same time are equally disturbing. The general public was every bit as interested in the girls who were prepared to carry out any order asked of them alongside the chanting wraiths that haunted the sidewalk outside the Los Angeles courthouse, turning the trial into a media spectacle. So who was this terrifying rabble and where on earth did Manson find them?

Manson had never felt like he truly belonged anywhere. After all, he had been the illegitimate child brought into a deeply religious household, spurned by his own mother, unrecognised by his father and ultimately rejected by society. Alone, he was nothing; a petty criminal with an unimpressive rap sheet. He had a nice voice and could play the guitar, but so could most drifting hippies in San Francisco during the Summer of Love. When it came to making a career in the music industry, he just didn't have what it takes to stand out, and so, once again, he was rebuffed.

Such isolation coupled with a crippling persecution complex meant it was only a matter of time before his personal ticking time bomb would explode. He desperately needed to do something big, something remarkable, and so, when he was finally released from prison in March 1967, he decided to change everything. If people had overlooked him up to this point, they wouldn't do so in the future. If his own family didn't appreciate him, he would create one that did.

While in jail, Manson had read the iconic book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. He had even taken self-help classes in order to reshape his life. As soon as

FROM HELL

© Alamy, Getty

“ MANSON WOULD PREY UPON VULNERABLE WOMEN WHO WERE DISILLUSIONED WITH THEIR LOT IN LIFE ”

he arrived in San Francisco he started practising on the drug-addled teens floating up and down Haight-Ashbury, quickly earning himself the nickname ‘The Gardener’ since he ‘tended’ to the young flowers living there. It was during this time that he met the first member of what would become the infamous Manson Family.

Manson enjoyed talking to the disillusioned students at the University of California and busking for small change. During one such impromptu performance he started chatting to a young assistant librarian by the name of Mary Theresa Brunner. The shy 23 year old, originally from Wisconsin, was instantly taken with Manson’s superficial charm and on hearing of his homeless status offered him a place to stay. Unlike the hundreds of hippies milling around, this was completely uncharacteristic behaviour for the history graduate, but Manson had worked his magic and Mary was smitten. Within a matter of weeks he was sharing her bed and changing the course of her life forever. Her once tidy, secure apartment became the first crash pad for Manson’s early Family, which comprised 18 hippie chicks who basked in his easy charm and lapped up his meaningless psycho-babble.

When Manson decided to take to the road in a Volkswagen van, Mary gave in her notice and walked away from the last vestiges of the normal world. In April 1968, she gave birth to his first son, Valentine Michael, while Manson’s girls delivered the baby and he cut the umbilical cord with his teeth.

Just like Mary, Lynette Fromme was an innocent girl from a regular middle-class background. With a beautiful voice and a sunny disposition, things should have been rosy for the pretty young redhead, but her father was a tyrannical man who was never satisfied with his daughter’s efforts. The abuse increased until Lynette snapped and began self-harming, shooting herself in the arm with a staple gun. Underage drinking and drug abuse quickly followed, until two suicide attempts later, when she decided to run away. She was an easy target for Manson, who discovered her sitting on her suitcase on Venice Beach, crying into a hanky. Manson offered her everything she had thus far lacked in her life: attention and appreciation. Years later, Fromme would describe Manson as having “a smile that went from warm daddy to twinkly devil. I couldn’t tell what he was”. Unfortunately, at this stage no one could have guessed what he was or where the decision to join him would lead.

It didn’t take long for more young women to throw their world up into the air and place their lives in Manson’s hands, leaving behind their safe, middle-class existence. A pattern of behaviour soon became apparent. Manson would prey upon vulnerable young women who were in some way disillusioned with their lot in life, shower them with warmth and understanding, before luring them back to his ever-growing entourage.

He soaked up philosophies, such as those espoused by the Process Church and Scientology, gave it his own unique spin and fed it back to the Family, who believed every word without question. Other, equally average young girls with mundane jobs and steady backgrounds followed the same path. 18-year-old Patricia Krenwinkel was a quiet bank teller, but just like all the other Family members, she was deeply insecure, and it was this vulnerability that Manson instinctively honed in on and took advantage of. Other men might think Patricia was overweight, but not Manson, who was quick to show her just how attractive she really was.

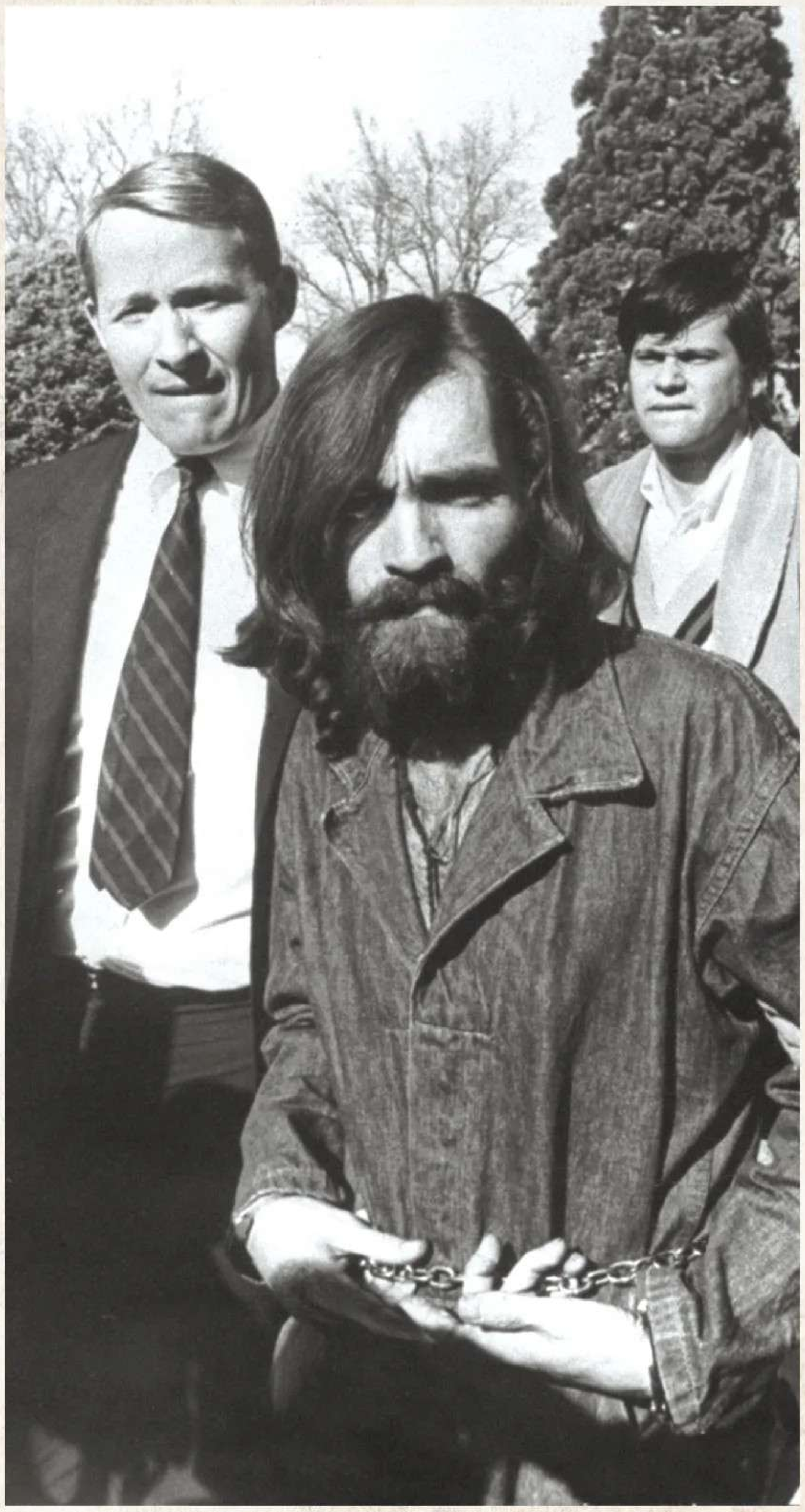
When Susan Atkins lost her mother to leukaemia and descended into a downward spiral of drugs and unhealthy, often violent relationships, it was Manson who picked her up and showed her that suicide was not the way out. Riddled with venereal disease and out of her mind on acid tabs, Susan danced the night away with the long-haired hippie stranger, reportedly knowing instantly that “he was something that I had been looking for”.

ABOVE
Manson Family members talk with reporters outside the courthouse during Charles Manson’s trial

However, it wasn't just impressionable girls who fell for his patter. Bobby "Cupid" Beausoleil was just 17 when he stumbled across Manson. Although he, like many of the Family, came from a secure background, Bobby had rejected the love of his parents and had already clocked up an impressive rap sheet for his rebellious teenage actions. He had also dabbled in the occult, working with Kenneth Anger on a movie, *Lucifer Rising*, which intrigued Manson. When his musical career stalled, Bobby took a job acting in a soft-porn movie alongside a Hollywood wannabe by the name of Catherine Share. The pair were both disillusioned by the direction their lives were taking them so it didn't take much for Manson to persuade them to join the Family and, before too long, they were carrying out his heinous commands.

At 25, Bruce Davis was older than most of the other Family members, but his long flowing hair and interest in Scientology made him an easy fit and the Family were happy to let him drift along for the ride.

However, out of the male members of the Family, Charles "Tex" Watson was the most influential character and a central member of the Family. Like his leader, Watson had been brought up in a religious household, regularly attending the night services and even running the local church youth group. He was a keen athlete and an excellent student but dropped out of university to join the hippie movement. Then he met Manson at a party held by Beach Boy Brian Wilson and gave up on any notion of a normal, healthy life. Tex and Manson understood one another from the start, and it wasn't long before he was following Manson's orders, no matter how dark they became.

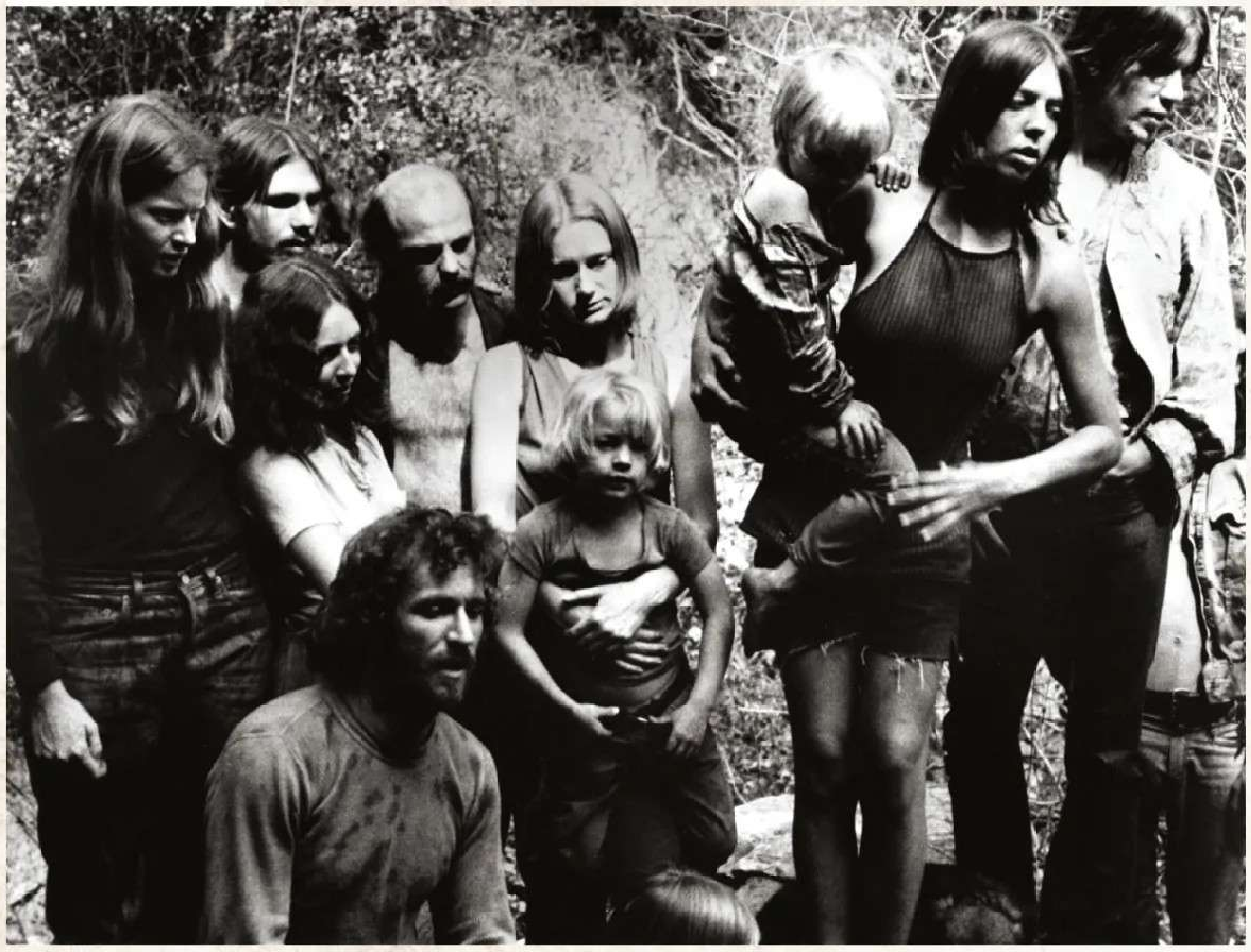


LEFT
A chained Charles Manson is led from a courthouse, December 1969

The Family's initial belief system was painfully simple; fun, games, love, sex, peaceful friendship for all. Peripheral members came and went but the core group stayed together at all times. Manson insisted the only time that mattered was the here and now. Everything that had occurred in the past was unimportant. This was supposedly intended to help the girls leave their troubles behind but, in reality, it ensured that all ties with their true families were severed once and for all, and, just as the past melted away into the ether, the future was equally unimportant. Of course, this notion would soon change when Manson began peddling his doomsday prophecy, but for the time being he was happy for the Family to drift along in the hazy present. This relaxed philosophy, based on the prevailing hippie culture but with a little of Manson's own personal needs thrown in, was an easy pill for the girls to swallow. Some, like Lynette Fromme, had genuine grievances with their upbringing and craved a gentler existence, while others, such as Bobby Beausoleil, were looking for an excuse to subvert the system. Either way, there were plenty of eccentric characters looking to join Manson's special Family.

Along with his disregard for both the past and the future, Manson had another psychological trick up his sleeve to disassociate his flock from their families. As each new member arrived, Manson gave them a pet name, an affectionate custom that hid a much darker motive. Each name evoked a particular trait their new leader found appealing. Catherine Share was renamed "Gypsy", Watson became "Tex", Susan Atkins became "Sadie Mae Glutz", and Brunner became "Mother Mary", while Patricia Krenwinkel was renamed "Katie" since, in Manson's eyes, it better suited her sweet,

BELOW
Manson refused to allow anyone in the Family to take contraception, which resulted in many young children at the Spahn Ranch



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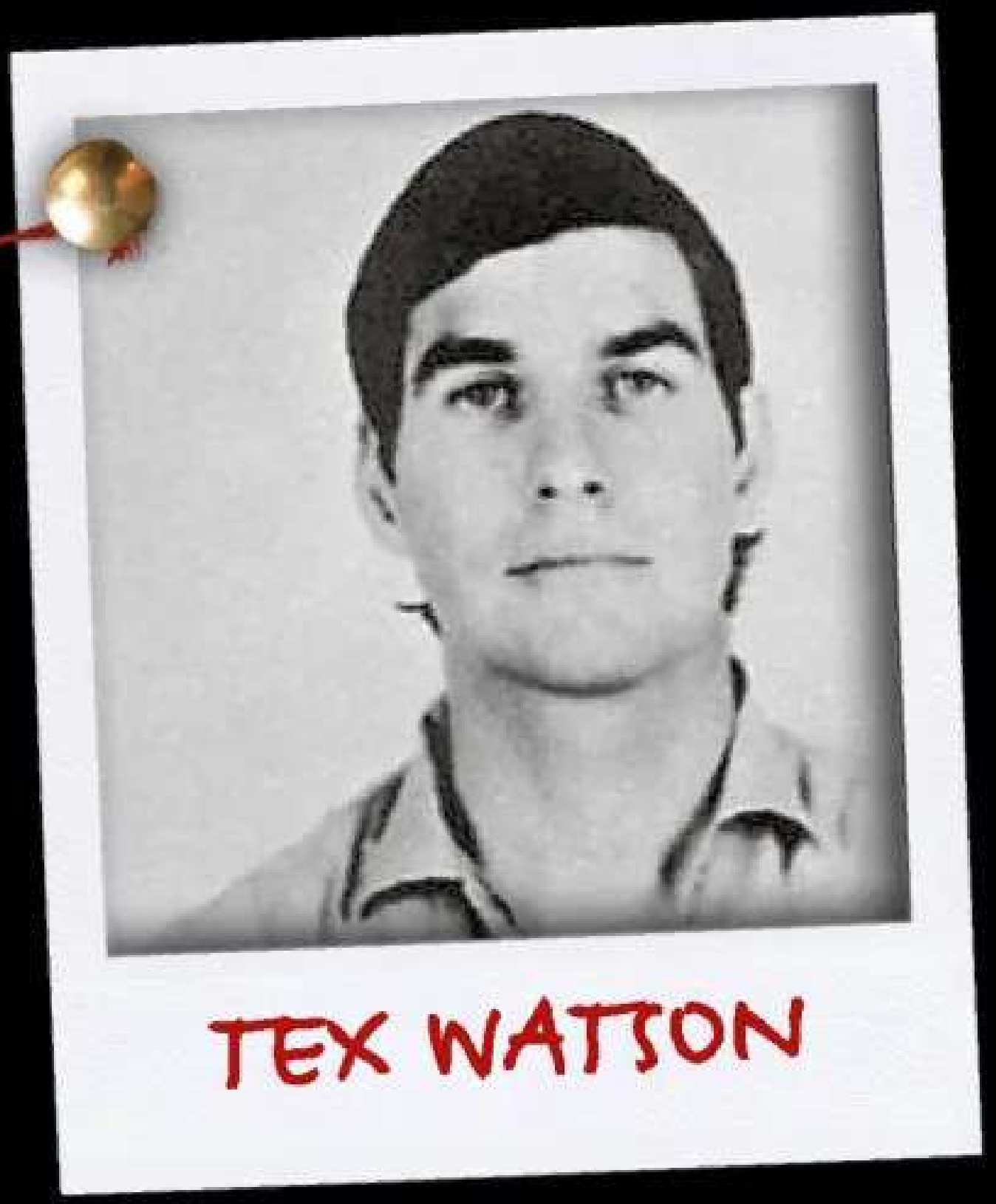
THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLES

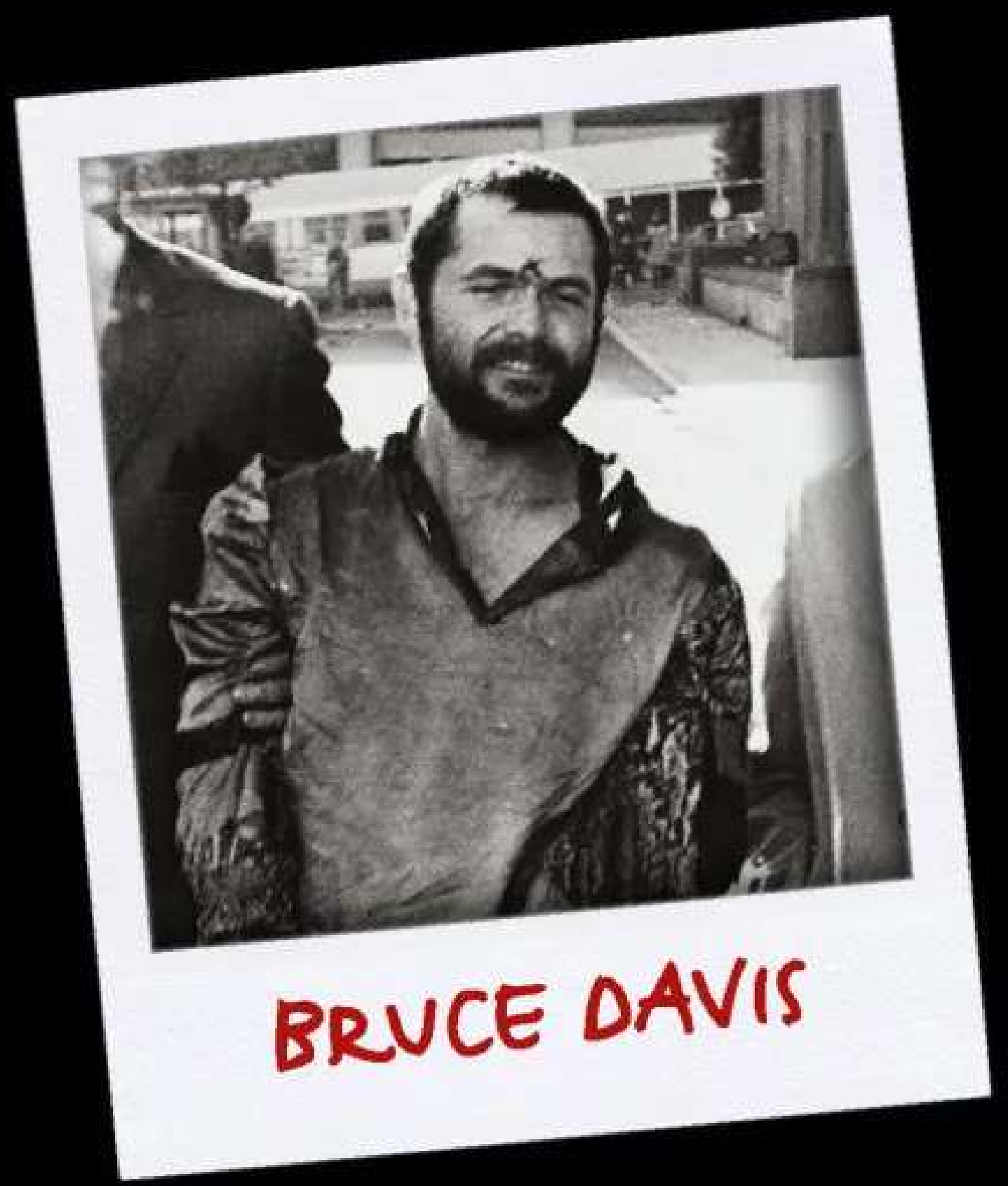
MANY FOLLOWERS OF MANSON DRIFTED IN AND OUT OF THE HIPPIE COMMUNE, BUT AN INTEGRAL FEW BECAME KEY PLAYERS IN HIS DERANGED FAMILY


TEX WATSON

As Manson's right-hand man, Charles Watson killed more people than any other disciple. Along with Manson, he was considered to be the brains behind the Family although he always deferred to his 'messiah' and obeyed all orders passed down to him. Originally from Dallas, he eventually dropped out of college and drifted to California, where he met up with Manson and moved into the Spahn Ranch. When the police stormed the commune, Tex fled back to Texas, where he spent nine months avoiding extradition, thereby missing the notorious 1970 trial alongside Manson. His death sentence was ultimately revised to life.

BOBBY BEAUSOLEIL

Bobby was always considered to be the beautiful disciple. His good looks ensured he was given roles in movies, but it soon became apparent that there was little in the way of talent behind the megawatt smile, so the offers quickly dried up. The hippie musician consistently denied being part of Manson's cult and claimed he never had his mind 'controlled'. However, he was prepared to kill on command. While in jail, he built musical instruments and painted pictures that he then sold online. He is one of the few Family members to show signs of genuine remorse.


BRUCE DAVIS

Bruce Davis was born in Louisiana, on 5 October 1942. The intelligent teenager had attended the University of Tennessee for three years before travelling to California in 1962. By 1967, he had moved to Oregon, where he met Fromme, Brunner and Krenwinkel, who introduced him to Manson. The two men enjoyed each other's company but Davis was not to join the Family until the summer of 1969, after he had returned to California from London, where he had spent time working at the Church of Scientology's headquarters. Having participated in two murders for Manson, Davis disappeared. He eventually gave himself up in 1970.

SUSAN ATKINS

Atkins was the most dramatic of Manson's girls and his most prolific female killer. Although she later claimed to be remorseful, she spent the majority of her life bragging about her involvement in the Carnival of Terror orchestrated by Manson, having joined the group in 1967. Nicknamed Crazy Sadie by the Family, she bore Manson a son whom he named Zezozose Zadfrack Glutz. Her death sentence was commuted to life in prison in 1972 when California's Supreme Court abolished the death penalty. She died from brain cancer in 2009 having been denied a request for parole for compassionate reasons.

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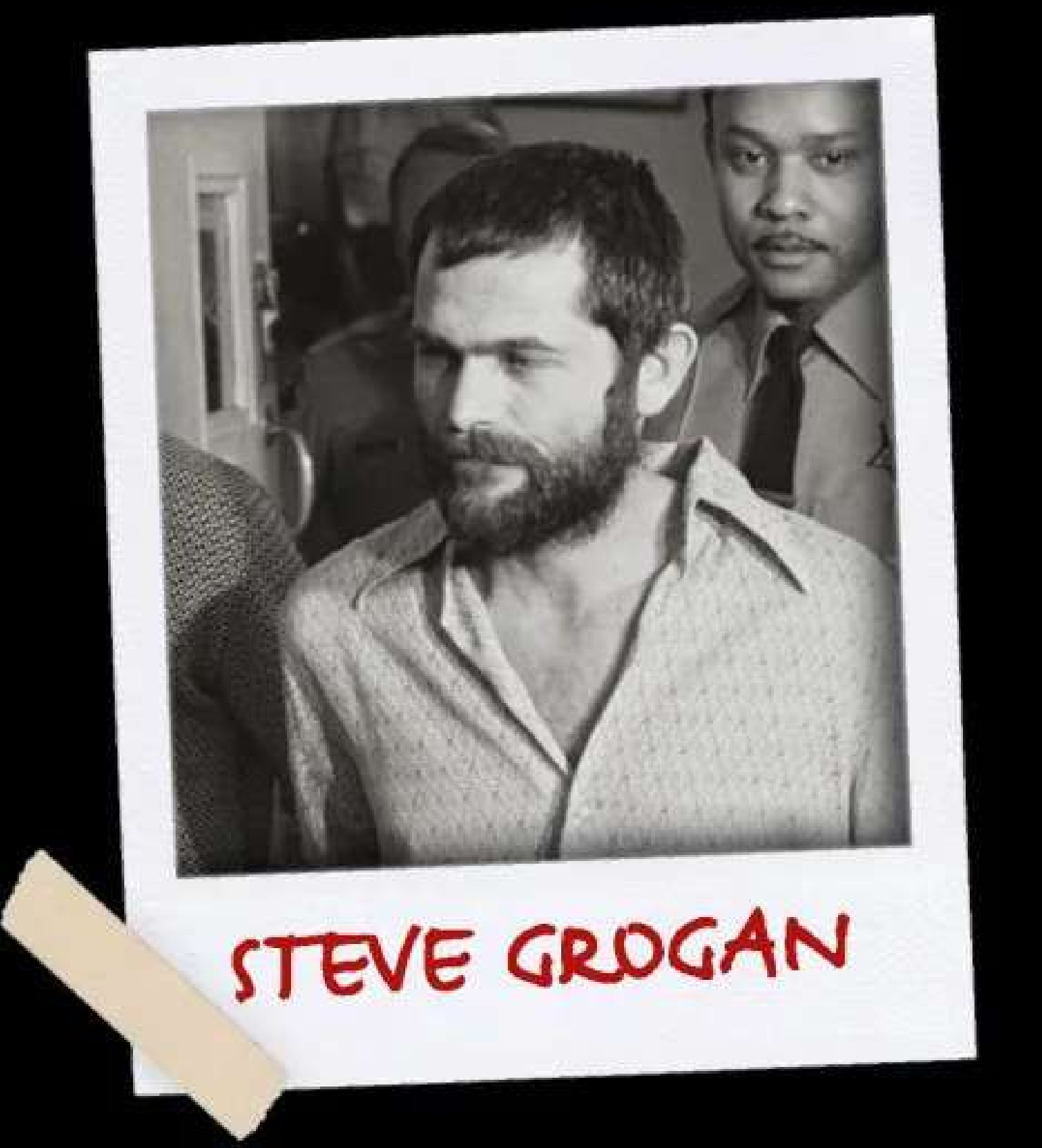

STEVE GROGAN

Steve 'Clem' Grogan had a history of insanity and was known to the police for numerous crimes, including counts of indecent exposure, long before he joined the Family. Although he was never as integral to the running of the group as Tex Watson, he was heavily involved with the Family's most violent actions and was ultimately convicted of two homicides instigated by Manson. His fragile mental state made him an obvious candidate for the cult, following Manson's orders without question and accepting his doomsday prophecy, Helter Skelter. He was later paroled after he helped authorities find the body of Donald Shea.

PATRICIA KRENWINKEL

21-year-old Patricia joined Manson's Family just three days after being introduced to him. So taken with the hypnotic psychopath was she that she left behind her comfortable middle-class existence in order to live with him at the now-infamous Spahn Ranch. Like so many of his girls, she was happy to follow his brutal orders, killing on command, although she later claimed that she had been abused by Manson before carrying out the heinous murders that she was ultimately convicted of. Having been denied parole at least 14 times, she is now California's longest-serving female prisoner.

LESLIE VAN HOUTEN

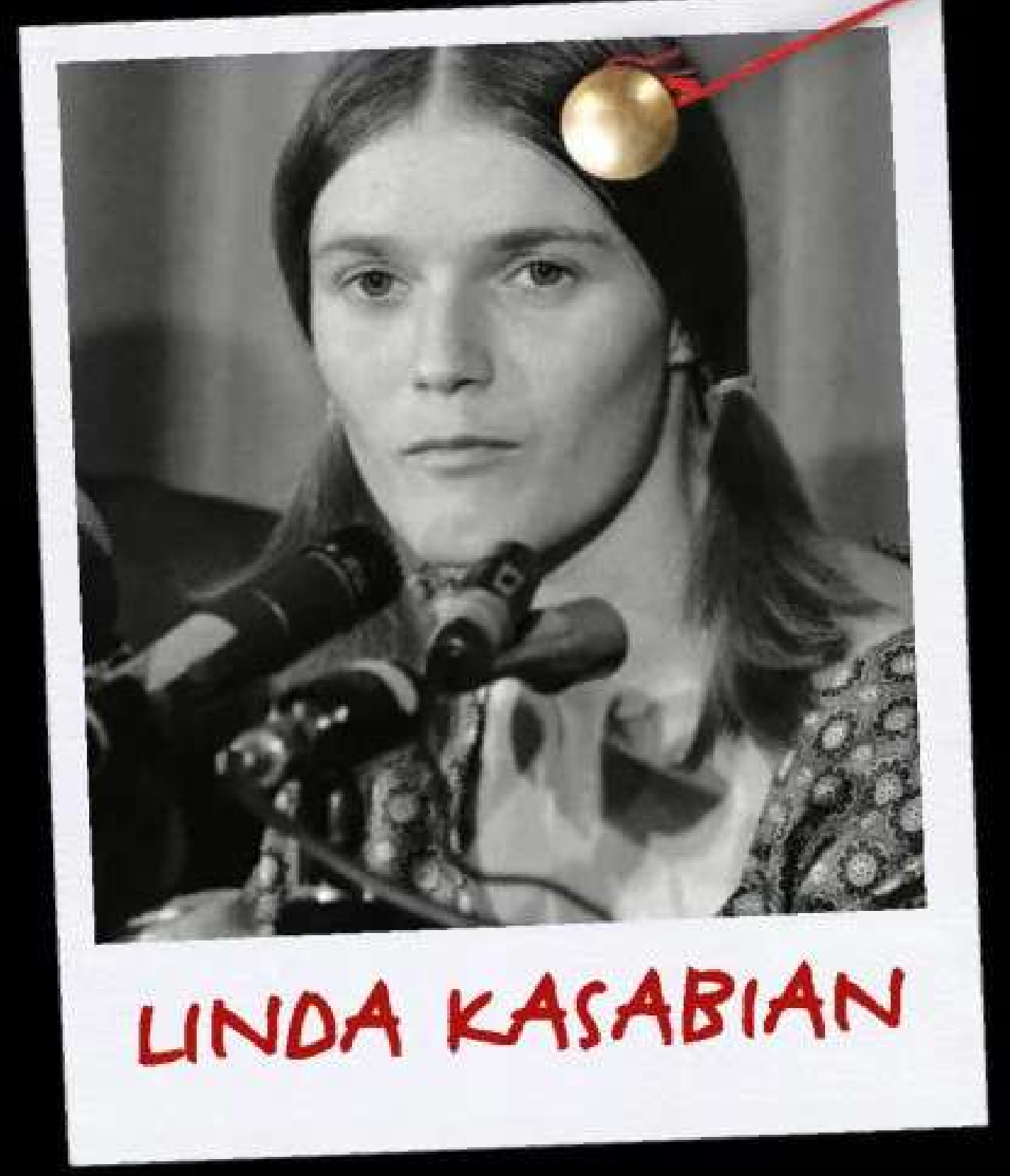
At 19 years old, Leslie Van Houten was the youngest member of the Family to actually participate in the murders. Her innocence and inexperience made her an easy target for Manson's preaching and she was happy to leave her real family behind in order to join the hippie commune at Spahn Ranch. Her infamy continued after her capture when her attorney, Ronald Hughes, was murdered. The suspected killers were members of the Family. In 2016, California's governor Jerry Brown turned down her plea for parole, claiming that she was still "an unreasonable danger to society."

innocent features. The kids were thrilled with their new monikers since it was a sign of Manson's acceptance into the group and gave them a sense of truly belonging to something. However, from Manson's point of view, this ‘rebirthing’ eroded the last control their parents had over their children. In renaming them, he had created his very own Family, where he could be the father. For a time, both parent and children were genuinely happy.

Drugs played a major role in the counterculture sweeping across America, and for Manson they were a vital component in the deconstruction of any moral fibre given to them by their real relatives. Some of his followers were already well-accustomed to mind-altering substances. Susan Atkins had been hospitalised through misuse of drugs long before she crossed paths with Manson. But for others, such as Brunner, or Krenwinkel, who had at one time contemplated becoming a nun, drug use was something other people did. Manson quickly made it clear that if you wanted to belong to the Family, heart and soul, you had to give yourself over to the ‘collective group’ and that meant free-for-all sex. For some of the girls this was an alien concept, but the accompanying near-constant drug abuse soon obliterated any awkwardness. Manson's personal favourite comprised a heady cocktail of LSD and marijuana, but the introduction of PCP and crystal meth certainly added to the unravelling of the Family. Before long he had created a company of malleable, adoring kids who were happy to give up all free will and put themselves in Manson's ever-loving, capable hands. He finally had what he had always wanted: a family of his own.

Life in the Family meant travelling light and roaming free. Their nomadic disposition required wheels, and over the course of their time together the Family acquired a number of unusual modes of transport. Clearly they weren't all going to fit into an average car, so they were always on the hunt for something more suitable. Initially, a black Volkswagen minibus, with its ample sleeping space, served them well, but as the Family grew in number it was upgraded to an old yellow-and-black school bus. Manson was quick to tell the girls the bus had been involved in a fatal accident where many young children had drowned after the bus had plummeted into a lake. Having ingested vast quantities of hallucinogens, the Family proceeded to re-enact the disaster and perform an exorcism to banish any remaining spirits.

The interior was decked out like a Bedouin tent, with purple velvet curtains, beanbags, peacock feathers and an obligatory hookah. As the Family travelled from town to town, onlookers marvelled at their happy hippie bus, but the gold brocade was hiding a darker mission, for Manson now had complete control over his people. And as his power grew, the ethos behind the Family began to warp. As the jolly bus rode across LA, it enticed younger runaways to join the Family. Dianne Lake, renamed ‘Snake’, was only 14 when she jumped onboard, unaware of where the bus would ultimately take her. Later vehicles included a rusty black and yellow Ford, used by the Family on their ‘creepy crawls’ where they would stake out their prey, and two four-wheel-drive Army-surplus Power Wagons, which Manson and his Family used to get to and from their hideout ranch in Death Valley. One such vehicle remains broken down under the baking sun to this day, covered in black-painted pentacles, the only hint of its infamous former owner.

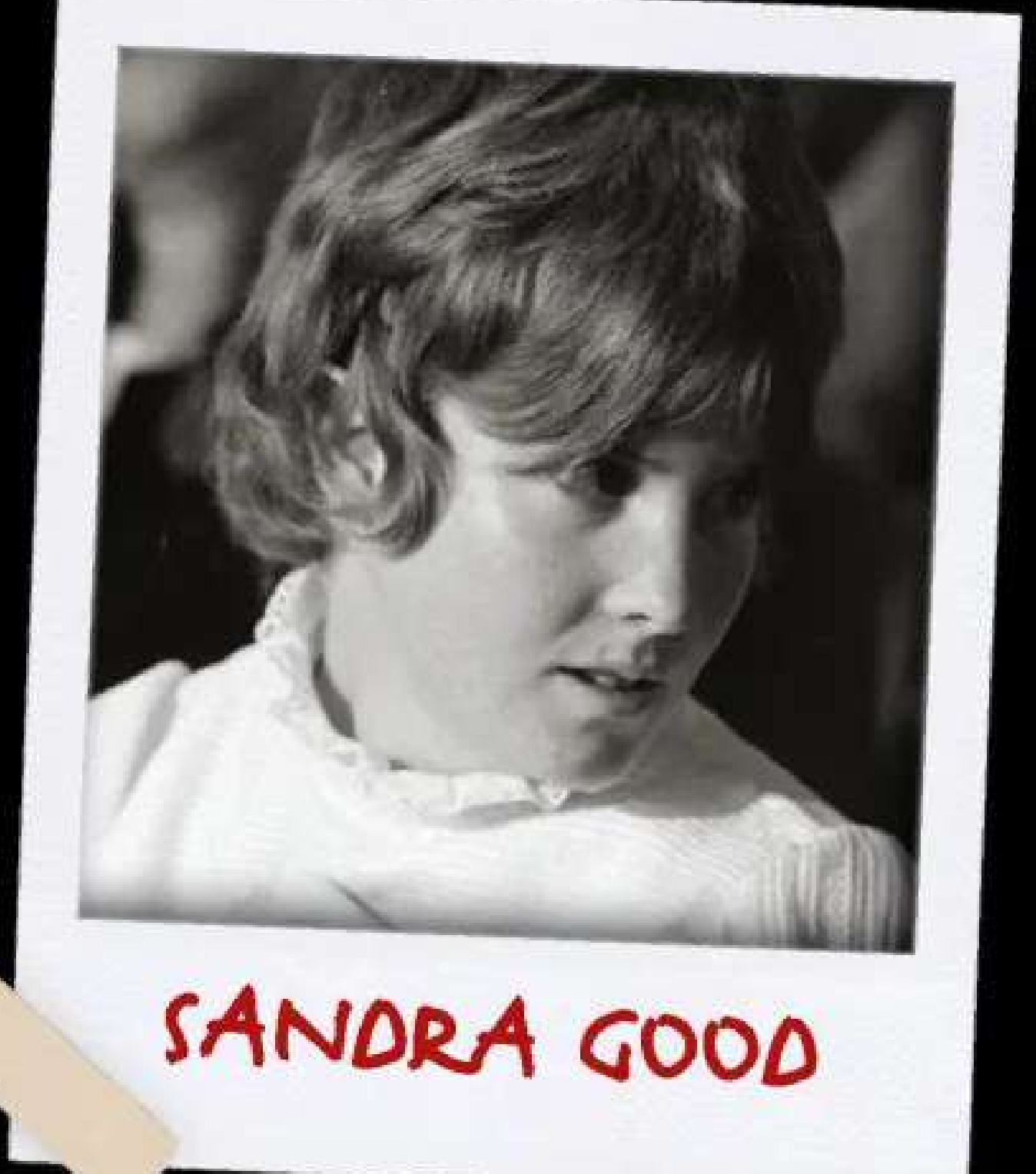


LINDA KASABIAN

At 20 years old, Linda was a twice-divorced mother when she and her little girl, Tanya, joined Manson's Family. Since she was the only member of the group with a legal driving licence, she drove the other disciples to the murder sites, acting as lookout while the others went inside to slaughter their victims. She is one of the few of Manson's girls to show remorse, even having a mental breakdown over the guilt she felt. She was granted immunity in exchange for her testimony, which led to the conviction of Manson, Watson, Atkins, Krenwinkel and Van Houten.

CATHERINE SHARE

Catherine ‘Gypsy’ Share was involved in the attempted murder of Barbara Hoyt but was ultimately handed down a lesser sentence of ‘conspiracy to dissuade a witness from testifying’. A key player in keeping the Family profile in the media after the trial had taken place, she was ultimately convicted, alongside five other Family members, of armed robbery and an attempt to hijack a 747 in order to secure the release of Manson and the jailed Family members.



SANDRA GOOD

The daughter of a San Diego stockbroker, Sandra Good was imprisoned in 1976 for ‘conspiracy to send threatening letters through the mail’. Although not directly involved with the murders, she carried out various tasks within the Family, including sending many letters to key company executives in order to put fear into the hearts of the ‘authorities’. She also made threatening phone calls, thereby maintaining the terrifying reputation of the Family after Manson's incarceration and keeping the cult in the media spotlight. She was paroled at the same time as Steve Grogan when she also helped locate the body of Donald Shea.

SQUEAKY FROMME

Although Lynette ‘Squeaky’ Fromme did not take part in the actual murders, she was an integral part of the Family and, alongside Susan Atkins, is generally thought to be Manson's right-hand woman. When he was taken into custody, it was Squeaky who became acting head of the Family in his absence. She was arrested in connection with the attempted murder of prosecution witness Barbara Hoyt and given a 90-day sentence. In 1975 she was convicted of attempting to assassinate President Gerald Ford. She made a prison break in 1987 but was quickly recaptured and eventually released for good in 2009.

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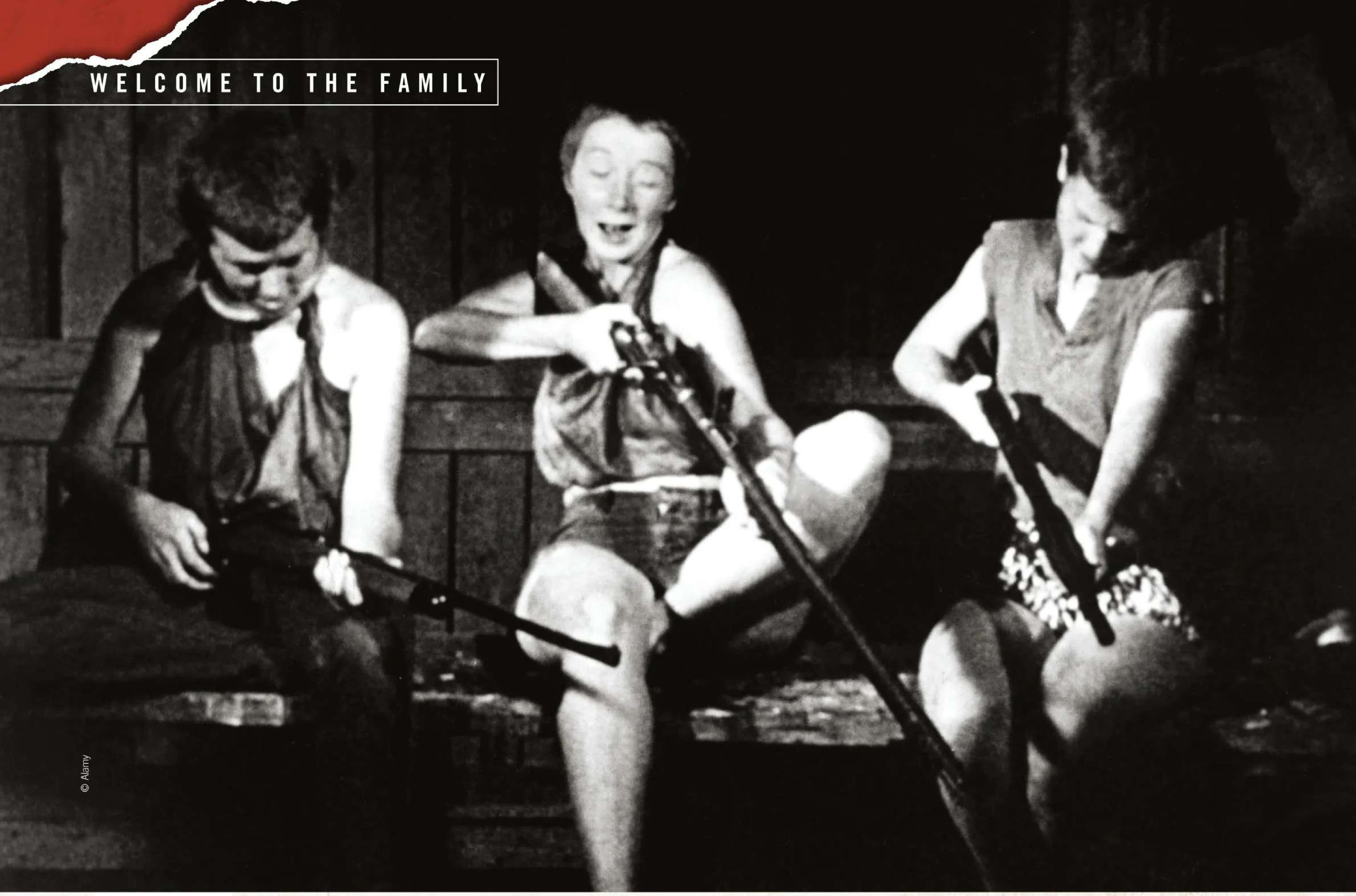

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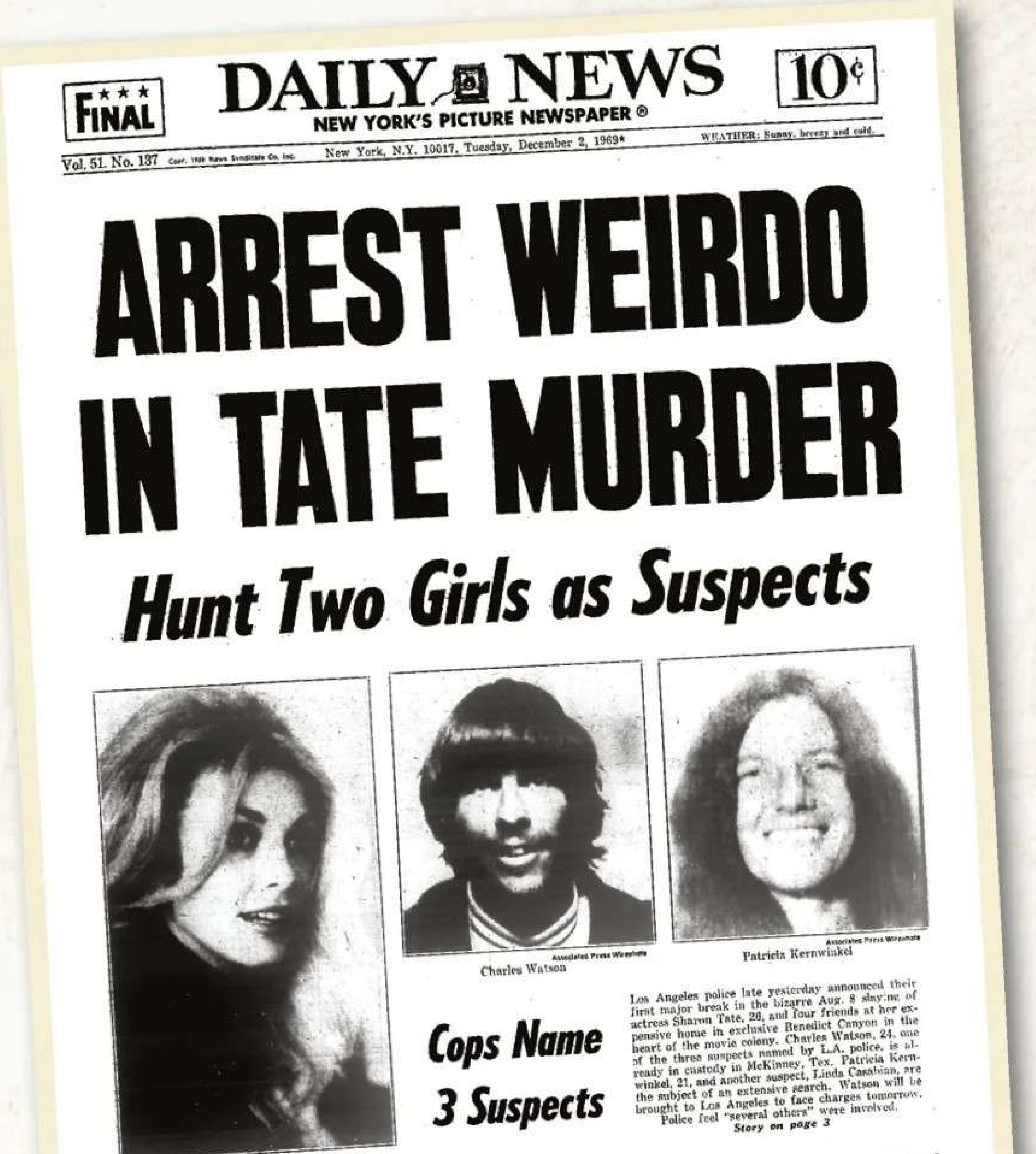
ABOVE
Lynette Fromme, centre, shows two of Manson's 'girls' how to load a gun

BELOW
On 2 December 1969, LA residents woke up to the news that Watson had been arrested for multiple murders at Cielo Drive

> “ MANSON HAD CHANGED FROM WARM-HEARTED FATHER FIGURE TO ALL-POWERFUL MESSIAH WHOSE WORD WAS LAW ”



FINAL ★★★

DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S PICTURE NEWSPAPER ®

10¢

Vol. 51. No. 137 Copr. 1969 News Syndicate Co. Inc. New York, N.Y. 10017, Tuesday, December 2, 1969* WEATHER: Sunny, breezy and cold.

ARREST WEIRDO IN TATE MURDER

Hunt Two Girls as Suspects

Charles Watson

Patricia Kernwinkel

Associated Press Wirephoto

Cops Name 3 Suspects

Los Angeles police late yesterday announced their first major break in the bizarre Aug. 8 slaying of actress Sharon Tate, 26, and four friends at her expensive home in exclusive Benedict Canyon in the heart of the movie colony. Charles Watson, 24, one of the three suspects named by L.A. police, is already in custody in McKinney, Tex. Patricia Kernwinkel, 21, and another suspect, Linda Casabian, are the subject of an extensive search. Watson will be brought to Los Angeles to face charges tomorrow. Police feel "several others" were involved.

Story on page 3

Sharon Tate—Three named in her bizarre murder.

Lindsay: 20c Fare Doomed

Story on Page 2

As Manson's paranoia grew, the atmosphere within the Family drastically altered. What had been a fun-filled hippie ride quickly descended into madness and mistrust. Manson had changed from warm-hearted father figure to all-powerful messiah whose word was law. Unfortunately, the 'living for the moment' viewpoint had been taken over by a new, darker philosophy that required some shadowy behaviour. 'Helter Skelter', the insane doomsday prophecy foretold by Manson, was fully embraced by the Family, who by this time had become his crazed disciples. If anyone thought things were going wrong, they were too frightened to back out now, and most of his drug-addled acolytes were unable to think for themselves. So either way, what Manson wanted Manson got.

Through careful manipulation, the Family had become a malleable cult with a madman at the helm. When he ordered the execution of Gary Hinman, Bobby Beausoleil repeatedly stabbed his friend in the chest while Susan Atkins and former librarian Mary Brunner held a pillow over his screaming mouth. Ex-church youth group leader Tex Watson happily led Susan 'Sadie' Atkins, Patricia 'Katie' Krenwinkel and Linda Kasabian to 10050 Cielo Drive, where the now-infamous Tate murders took place. The following night, the brutal LaBianca murders occurred, where Katie Krenwinkel, the former Sunday school teacher, and Leslie Van Houten stabbed victim Rosemary LaBianca 41 times, before Katie scored the word

'WAR' into Leno LaBianca's stomach. The three then settled down in their victim's kitchen to eat cheese from the fridge and drink chocolate milk. They did all this because Manson had told them to do it.

Somehow, Manson had fed these young, impressionable girls and boys a concoction of half-baked philosophies, a constant stream of drugs and total isolation from the real world, until they had all but forgotten their quiet former selves and become thoughtless mass murderers without an ounce of compassion for anyone but their messiah.

During the trial, those lucky enough not to have been arrested showed their undying allegiance to Manson by causing a scene outside the courthouse. Led by Squeaky Fromme, the girls loitered on the sidewalk, causing disruption where possible and intimidating witnesses as they entered and exited the building. When Manson shaved his long, flowing hair off, claiming, "I am the Devil, and the Devil always has a bald head," the Family appeared the following day with matching shaven heads. When their leader cut an X into his forehead, so too did the women sitting cross-legged on the pathway, chanting and singing. Each wore a sheathed hunting knife on their thigh. The unnerving sight only added to the media circus and ensured the Family would go down in criminal history alongside their messiah.

However, they were prepared to do more than merely put on a show. When former Family member Barbara Hoyt decided to testify against Manson, the fanatical girls attempted to silence her once and for all. Ruth Ann Morehouse, renamed 'Ouisch', laced a burger with multiple doses of LSD. The attempted murder failed. Similarly, ex-member Paul Watkins was badly burned when his van caught fire under suspicious circumstances. Even during the trial, Manson could instigate murderous behaviour from his Family. When his own lawyer, Ronald Hughes, irritated him in court, Manson declared, "I don't ever want to see you in this courtroom again." A few days later, he went camping, never to be seen alive again. It has long since been accepted that the Family 'dealt' with him on behalf of their leader.

After Manson was convicted, Fromme chose to follow him from prison to prison, keeping the Family together where she could, and even showing her continued support by attempting to assassinate President Gerald Ford.

Terrifyingly, Manson's sadistic, twisted Family continued to wreak havoc long after his incarceration, even being implicated with a murder in the UK. The death of Joel Pugh is shrouded in mystery, and due to his brief and tenuous connection with Manson, it has been argued that his suspicious death occurred at the hands of the Family.

Manson may have started out as a small-time criminal and failed musician, but thanks to his loyal entourage he has become the face of pure evil. Like Rasputin before him, he clearly had mesmeric abilities, capable of preying on the vulnerable and offering them everything they thought they needed. By weakening their moral values through copious amounts of drugs and eroding their true family ties, he created a monstrous Family of deranged relatives. He transported them to the middle of nowhere, a make-believe ranch in the desert, where he was sole ruler and all connection with the real world was lost. It is ironic that they believed they needed him to be truly free, when in fact, it was Manson who desperately needed his Family in order to become the icon of wickedness he is considered to be today.

Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel and Leslie Van Houten showed little remorse as they appeared in court for their part in the 1969 killings

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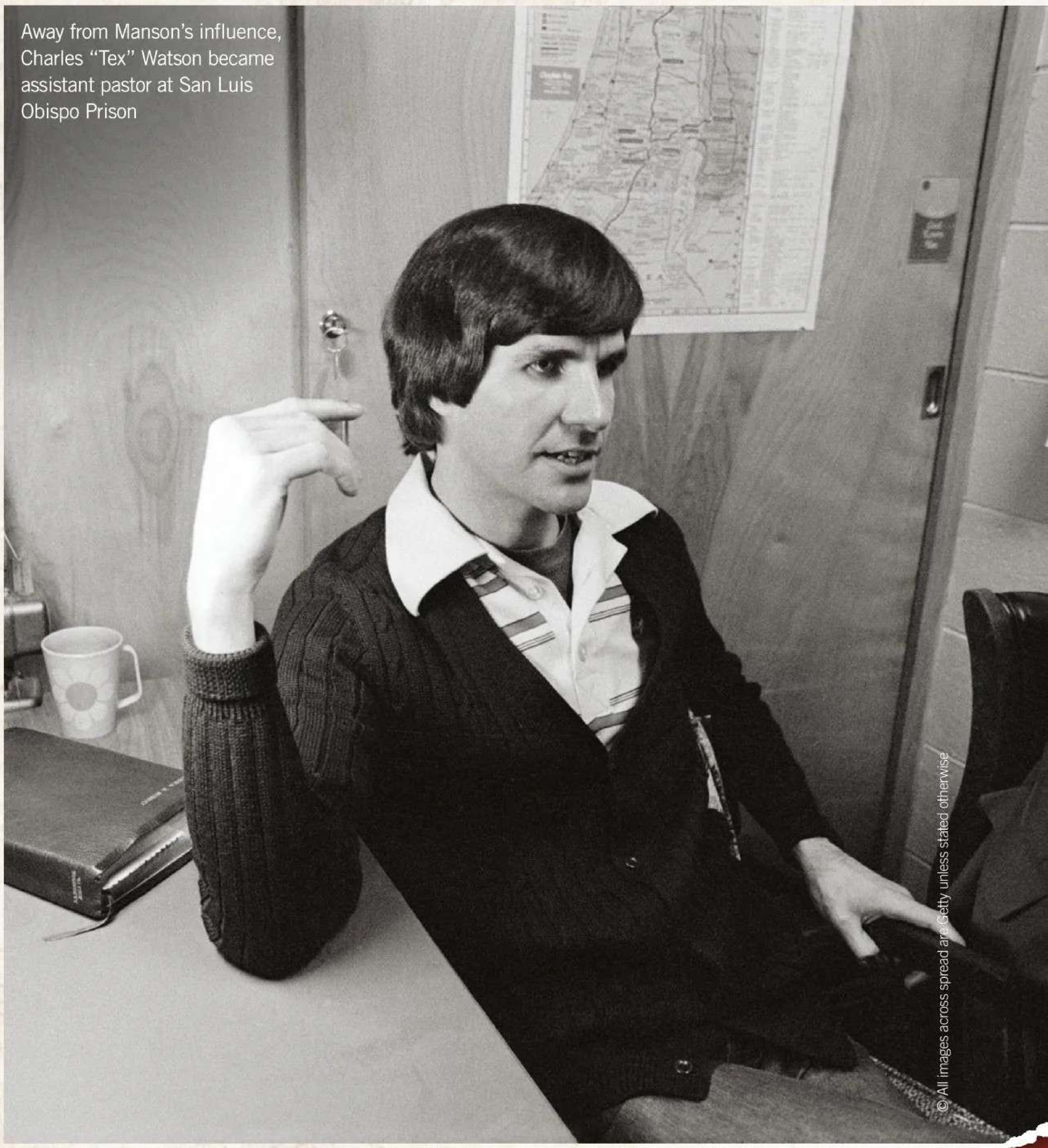

Away from Manson's influence, Charles "Tex" Watson became assistant pastor at San Luis Obispo Prison

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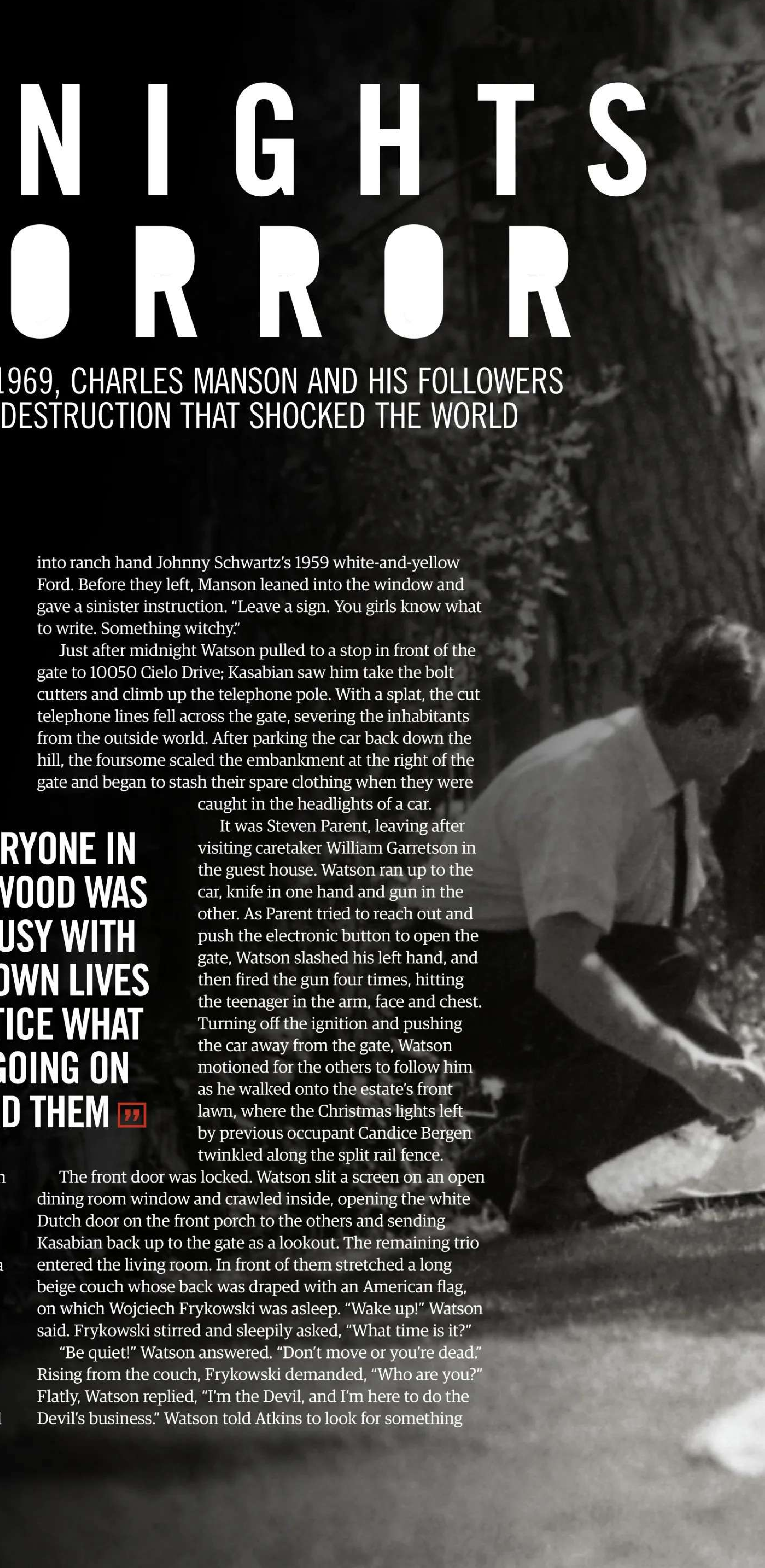
TWO NIGHTS OF HORROR

OVER TWO HOT AUGUST NIGHTS IN 1969, CHARLES MANSON AND HIS FOLLOWERS UNLEASHED A WAVE OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION THAT SHOCKED THE WORLD

WORDS **GREG KING**



After nearly a week's absence in Northern California, Charles Manson returned to Spahn Ranch on Friday 8 August 1969 to find that his world was disintegrating. Bobby Beausoleil had been arrested; if he talked, the police would descend on Spahn Ranch. Later that afternoon, Mary Brunner and Sandra Good drove to a nearby Sears store to make some purchases using a stolen credit card. At 10 p.m. he learned that Brunner and Good had been arrested. Dennis Wilson had rejected him; Terry Melcher had rejected him; Rudi Altobelli had rejected him; his Family was on the verge of being destroyed.

Manson's mood turned sour. What drove him to action that particular night seems to have stemmed from a combination of factors: 'Helter Skelter', certainly, but also revenge against the establishment that had shunned him; new crimes, with bloody messages left at the scene, might raise doubts about Beausoleil's culpability in Hinman's death and thus prevent him from telling all he knew and implicating Manson. But anger also joined with desperation – his Family was falling apart. New murders would solidify Manson's hold over his followers; their participation would help to ensure their silence if the police came for the group. Everyone in Hollywood, Manson complained, was too busy with their own lives to notice what was going on around them. No one was interested in anyone else. With this, he declared, "Now is the time for Helter Skelter."

> "EVERYONE IN HOLLYWOOD WAS TOO BUSY WITH THEIR OWN LIVES TO NOTICE WHAT WAS GOING ON AROUND THEM"

Manson pulled Charles 'Tex' Watson, Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel and Linda Kasabian aside. He told each to dress in dark garb, get a knife and a change of clothes. "I want you to go to that house where Terry Melcher used to live," he told Watson, "and totally destroy everyone in that house, as gruesome as you can." When the group assembled, they had three knives, a .22-calibre Buntline Special revolver, a pair of bolt cutters, and a 40-foot strand of nylon rope. They climbed into ranch hand Johnny Schwartz's 1959 white-and-yellow Ford. Before they left, Manson leaned into the window and gave a sinister instruction. "Leave a sign. You girls know what to write. Something witchy."

Just after midnight Watson pulled to a stop in front of the gate to 10050 Cielo Drive; Kasabian saw him take the bolt cutters and climb up the telephone pole. With a splat, the cut telephone lines fell across the gate, severing the inhabitants from the outside world. After parking the car back down the hill, the foursome scaled the embankment at the right of the gate and began to stash their spare clothing when they were caught in the headlights of a car.

It was Steven Parent, leaving after visiting caretaker William Garretson in the guest house. Watson ran up to the car, knife in one hand and gun in the other. As Parent tried to reach out and push the electronic button to open the gate, Watson slashed his left hand, and then fired the gun four times, hitting the teenager in the arm, face and chest. Turning off the ignition and pushing the car away from the gate, Watson motioned for the others to follow him as he walked onto the estate's front lawn, where the Christmas lights left by previous occupant Candice Bergen twinkled along the split rail fence.

The front door was locked. Watson slit a screen on an open dining room window and crawled inside, opening the white Dutch door on the front porch to the others and sending Kasabian back up to the gate as a lookout. The remaining trio entered the living room. In front of them stretched a long beige couch whose back was draped with an American flag, on which Wojciech Frykowski was asleep. "Wake up!" Watson said. Frykowski stirred and sleepily asked, "What time is it?"

"Be quiet!" Watson answered. "Don't move or you're dead." Rising from the couch, Frykowski demanded, "Who are you?" Flatly, Watson replied, "I'm the Devil, and I'm here to do the Devil's business." Watson told Atkins to look for something

ABOVE
The county coroner's office take notes and look at the bodies found on the lawn of the Sharon Tate-Roman Polanski home

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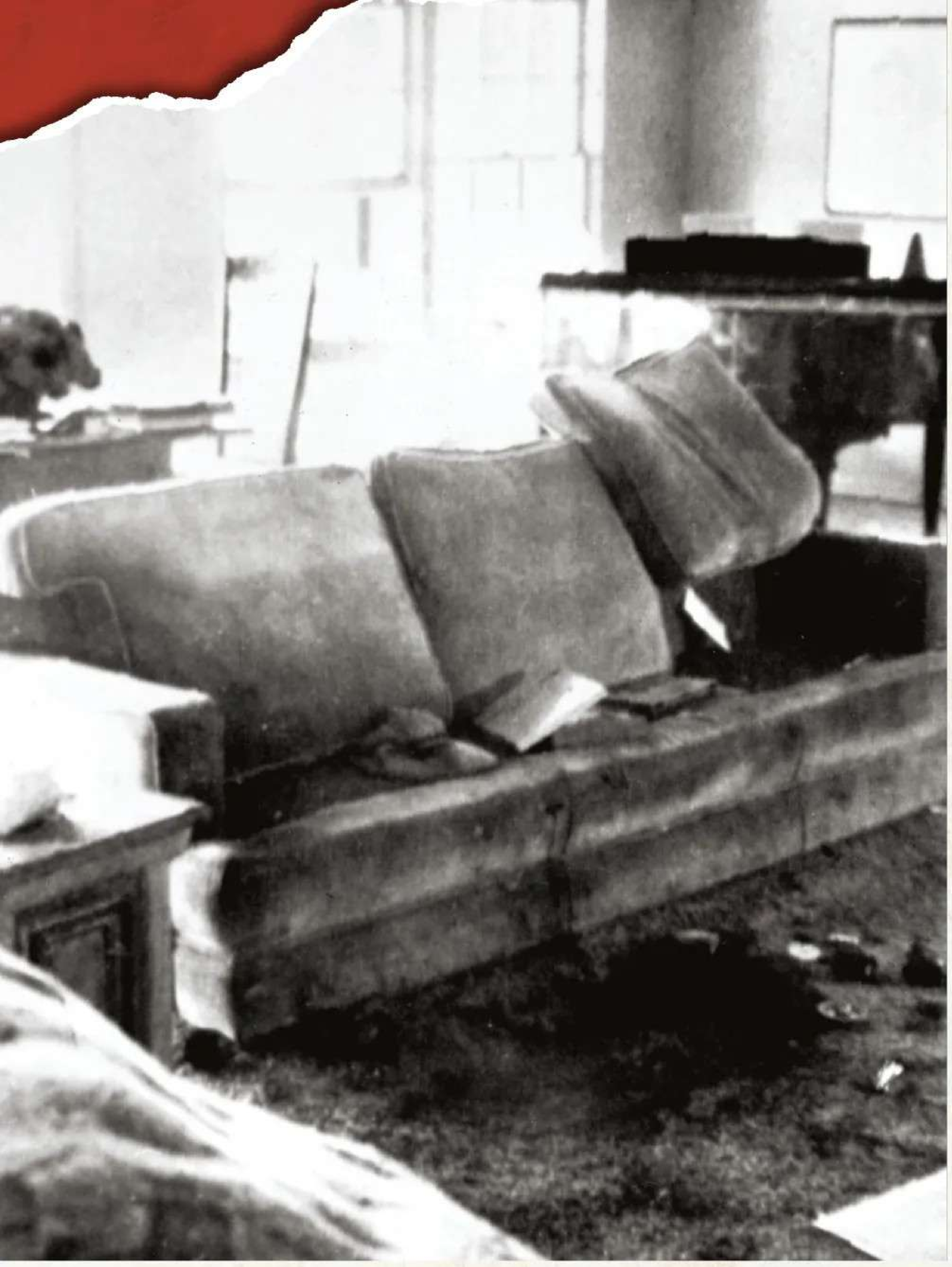


ABOVE LEFT
The living room at 10050 Cielo Drive after the murders. Sharon's body was found on the floor with her back against the couch, while Jay had died on the carpet just to the right

ABOVE RIGHT
Sharon Tate's lifeless body is wheeled from her home where she was brutally killed

BELOW
The front cover of the *Daily News* nearly four months after the bloodbath at Cielo Drive

with which to tie up Frykowski. She found a towel and tried to tie his hands before searching the rest of the house. In the hallway leading to the bedrooms she paused at the open door to the bedroom shared by Abigail Folger and Wojciech. Abigail leaned against the headboard, reading a book, yet inexplicably, when she saw Atkins – a strange woman dressed in black who suddenly appeared in the door after midnight – she only smiled and waved. Atkins smiled and waved back before peering through the half-open door just opposite: Sharon Tate was on the bed, propped up against the headboard; Jay Sebring sat on the edge of the bed, his back to the door.

Hearing that there were three others in the house, Watson ordered Atkins to bring them back. "Get up and go into the living room," Atkins told Abigail as she flashed her knife. "Don't ask any questions." Then she did the same with Sharon and Jay. In shock, they did as she said.

With Sharon, Jay and Abigail now in the living room, Watson grabbed the rope he had brought and threw one end over a ceiling beam that ran the length of the room and supported the loft above. Once the rope dangled from the ceiling, he approached Jay and tied his wrists in front of him, looped it around his neck, and pushed him down into an armchair to the left of the couch. Turning to Sharon, Watson took the other end of the rope hanging from the beam and wrapped it around her neck. He then ordered the prisoners to lie on their stomachs in front of the fireplace.

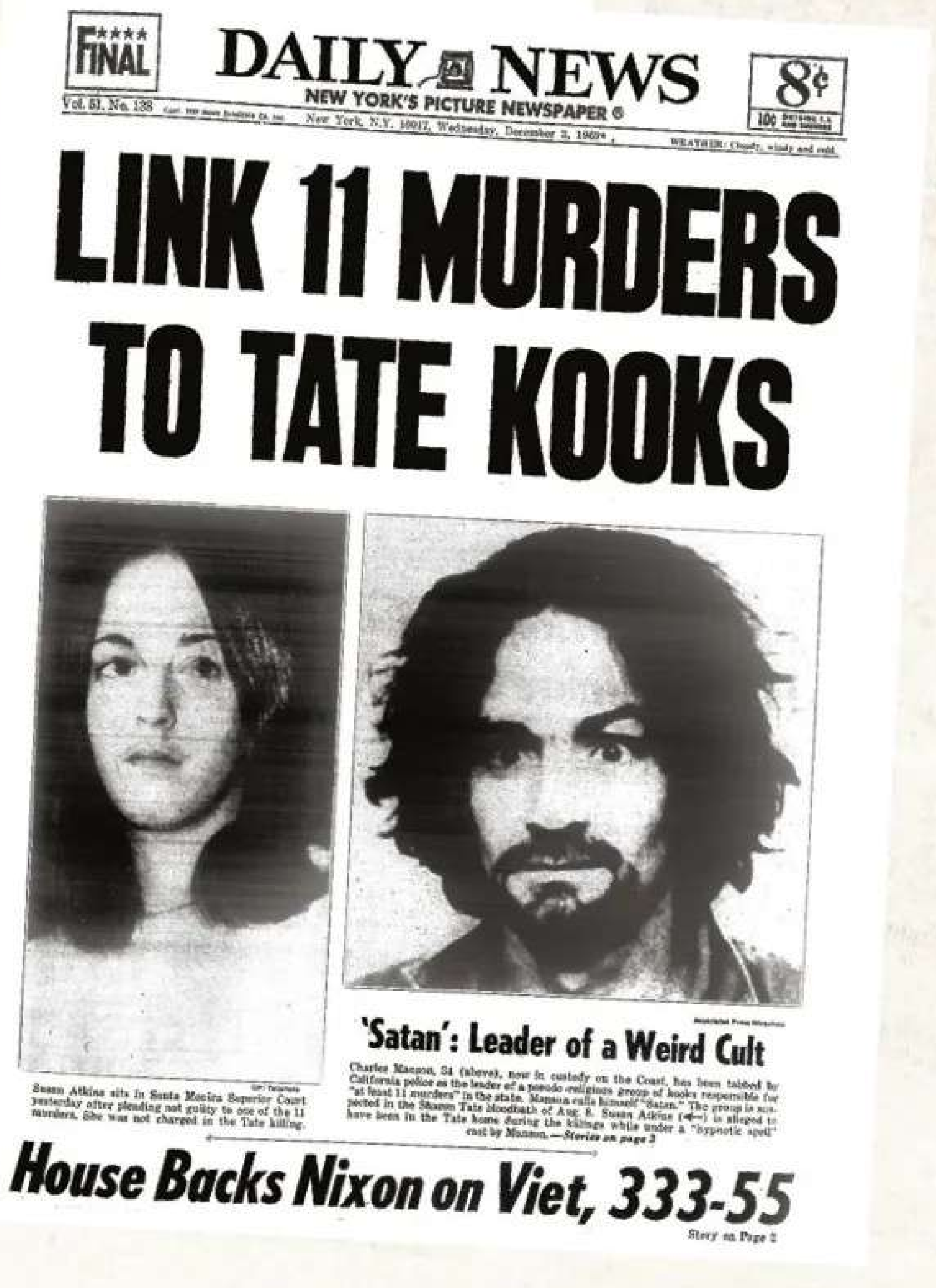
Eight and a half months pregnant and wearing only a bikini, Sharon began to cry. "Can't you see she's pregnant?" Jay asked. "Let her sit down!" He started to rise from the chair and walk toward Watson. His effort to protect Sharon proved fatal: Watson aimed the gun and pulled the trigger. The bullet struck Jay on the left side of his chest, smashed his left fifth rib, and punctured his left lung. With a moan he collapsed to the floor; as Watson ran over and kicked him viciously in the face, Sharon and Abigail screamed.

"I want all the money you've got here!" Watson yelled at the screaming women. Abigail, terrified, said that she had money in her purse in her bedroom. Atkins guarded her with a knife as she walked back into her bedroom and grabbed her black canvas shoulder bag. She handed over $72 – all of the cash she had – but Atkins refused the offered credit cards.

Back in the living room, Watson grabbed Abigail and tied her hands with a loose strand of the rope. He then looped the other end of the rope a few more times around Jay's neck as he lay dying on the floor. Pulling on the free end, Watson forced Sharon and Abigail to stand on their toes to avoid being strangled. Suddenly, Jay began to stir. Hearing his moans, Watson stabbed him several times in the back and side with his double-edged knife, piercing his lungs.

"What are you going to do with us?" a terrified Sharon asked. "You're all going to die," Watson announced. Sharon, Abigail and Wojciech began to plead for their lives. As Wojciech struggled with his tied wrists, Watson looked at Atkins and ordered, "Kill him!" She ran over to the couch and raised her knife but hesitated for a second. He managed to free his hands and jumped up, knocking Atkins onto the floor with him as they struggled. In this melee Atkins stabbed blindly, hitting Wojciech in the leg before he managed to break free by pulling her long hair and sending them both crashing against a trestle table and into an armchair, where Atkins lost her knife: the police would later find it, blade up, lodged between the seat cushion and rear of the chair. "Blood was everywhere," Atkins remembered. "Above everything, I could hear Sharon Tate crying, sobbing."

Wojciech stumbled across the living room, toward the entrance hall and the open front door



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DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S PICTURE NEWSPAPER ®

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Vol. 51. No. 138 New York, N.Y. 10017, Wednesday, December 3, 1969

WEATHER: Cloudy, windy and cold.

LINK 11 MURDERS TO TATE KOOKS

'Satan': Leader of a Weird Cult

Susan Atkins sits in Santa Monica Superior Court yesterday after pleading not guilty to one of the 11 murders. She was not charged in the Tate killing.

Charles Manson, 34 (above), now in custody on the Coast, has been tabbed by California police as the leader of a pseudo-religious group of kooks responsible for "at least 11 murders" in the state. Manson calls himself "Satan." The group is suspected in the Sharon Tate bloodbath of Aug. 9. Susan Atkins (←) is alleged to have been in the Tate home during the killings while under a "hypnotic spell" cast by Manson.—Stories on page 3

House Backs Nixon on Viet, 333-55

Story on Page 2

> **“WOJCIECH STAGGERED OUT OF THE FRONT DOOR, COVERED IN BLOOD, AND COLLAPSED AT THE SIDE OF THE PORCH”**

of the house as Atkins clung to him, beating at him with her fists. As Wojciech neared the door, Watson aimed his revolver and fired twice. The first bullet struck Wojciech just below his left armpit, lodging in his back; the second hit him in the thigh. Still, he kept on. When the gun jammed, Watson used it to beat Wojciech over the head 13 times. “I heard the crack of bone - Frykowski's skull,” Atkins recalled. The wooden handle broke. “Help me, oh God, help me!” Wojciech screamed as he reached the open door.

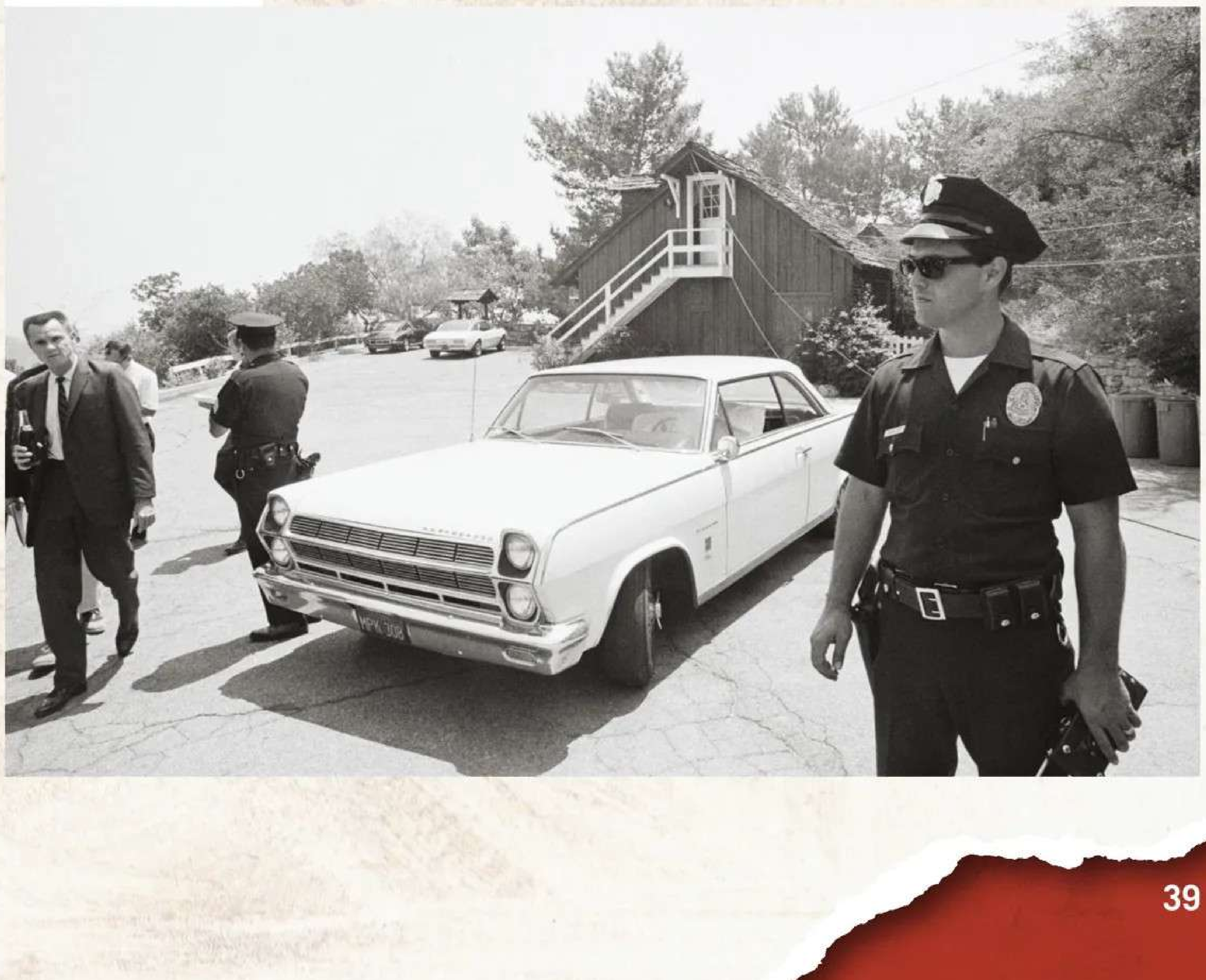
Kneeling by the gate, Linda Kasabian heard “horrible sounds” coming from the house. A man shouted, “No, no!” and a woman was screaming. As she ran onto the lawn, Wojciech staggered out of the front door, covered in blood, and collapsed at the side of the porch as Watson caught up with him and repeatedly stabbed him.

Abigail got free and tried to escape. Krenwinkel cornered her in the living room, slashing out with a knife. Taller and stronger than Krenwinkel, Abigail grabbed the woman's hair and had her pinned against the wall when Watson ran back into the room. Seeing him, Abigail relaxed her grip on Krenwinkel, let her arms drop and cried out in resignation, “I give up, take me!” Watson plunged his knife into the right side of her abdomen so deeply that he exposed her intestines. With a cry Abigail collapsed.

On the porch, Wojciech struggled to his feet and began stumbling across the front lawn, screaming, “Help me! Oh God! Help me!” Watson heard him. Shouting at Atkins to watch Sharon, he ran out of the door and across the bloodstained front porch. Wojciech saw him coming, knife raised. “Oh God, no! Stop! Stop! Oh God, no, don't!” he screamed. Watson jumped Wojciech, stabbing him repeatedly in the back, the chest, the arms, and the legs, “until my wrist disappeared in the mess,” he later wrote.

Though seriously wounded, Abigail got up and staggered down the hall into Sharon's bedroom. Krenwinkel saw her and gave chase, catching Abigail just as she reached the French

ABOVE
Sharon Tate's picture-perfect looks won her roles in TV shows and films



BELOW
Steven Parent was in the wrong place at the wrong time; he ended up becoming the first victim on the fateful night of the Tate murders. Here, police are shown guarding his car

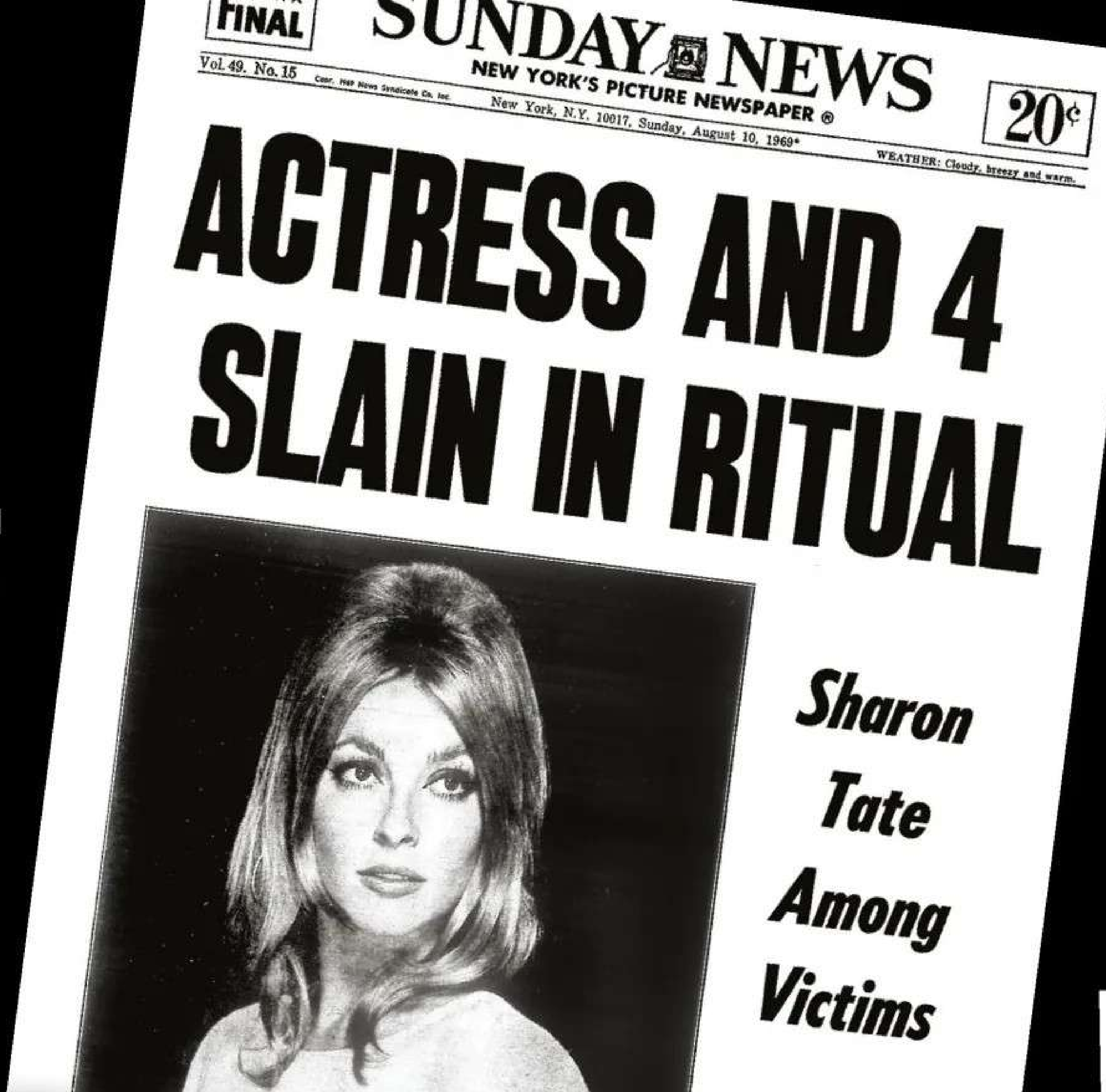
© Getty Images, TopFoto

MANSON MEETS SHARON TATE

LESS THAN FIVE MONTHS BEFORE HE ORDERED HER DEATH, MANSON CAME FACE TO FACE WITH HIS MOST FAMOUS VICTIM

On Sunday, 23 March 1969, Manson arrived at 10050 Cielo Drive, unaware that Terry Melcher had moved out over Christmas and that director Roman Polanski and his wife, actress Sharon Tate, had moved in. That afternoon, Shahrokh Hatami, Sharon Tate's personal photographer, had been shooting pictures of the actress when he spotted an oddly dressed man on the front lawn and confronted him. Manson explained he was looking for someone but Hatami cut him off, saying, “This is the Polanski residence. This is not the place. Maybe the people you want is back there,” he gestured, pointing toward the guest house at the far end of the estate and telling Manson to take the dirt path on the other side of the lawn. As Manson stood there, Sharon Tate appeared in the doorway and asked Hatami what he wanted. Manson looked at her, turned and walked away, doing as he had been directed in taking the pathway to the guest house only to find it empty. He returned a few hours later and confronted estate owner Rudi Altobelli, who was living in the guest house. Altobelli was in the shower when he heard his dogs bark; he was furious to find that Manson had let himself into the guest house. He told Manson that Melcher no longer lived at the estate and dismissed him.

The next day, Altobelli joined Sharon on a flight to Europe. She had one question for him: “Did that creepy-looking guy come back there yesterday?”



FINAL

SUNDAY NEWS

NEW YORK'S PICTURE NEWSPAPER ®

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WEATHER: Cloudy, breezy and warm.

ACTRESS AND 4 SLAIN IN RITUAL

Sharon Tate Among Victims

←Actress Sharon Tate, whose husband, director Roman Polanski, specializes in suspense and the macabre, played a

VICTIMS OF A MADMAN

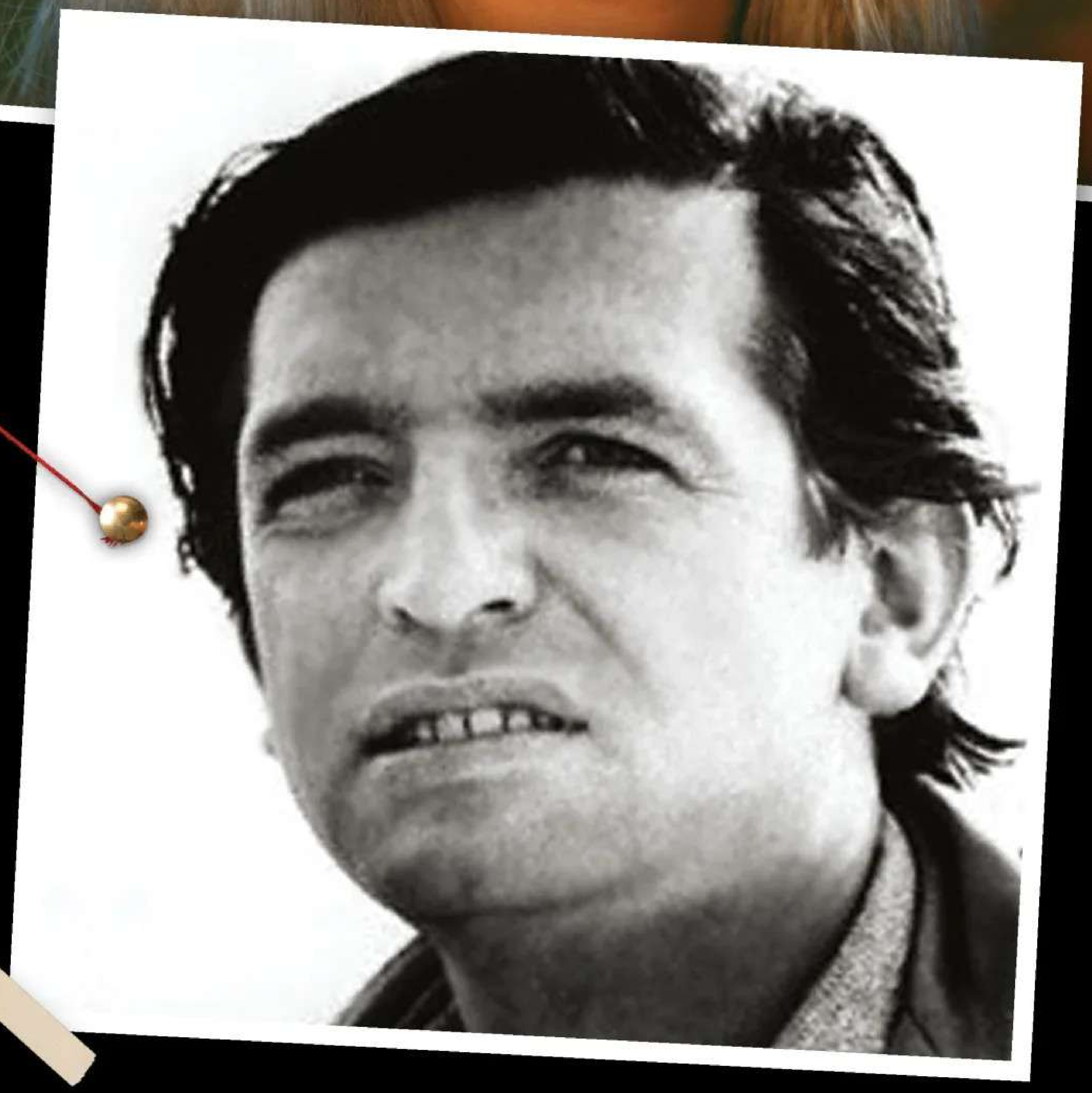
BETWEEN 9 AND 10 AUGUST 1969 MANSON'S FAMILY CLAIMED SEVEN VICTIMS, LIVES CUT TRAGICALLY SHORT AND SOON OVERSHADOWED BY THE BIZARRE BAND OF KILLERS

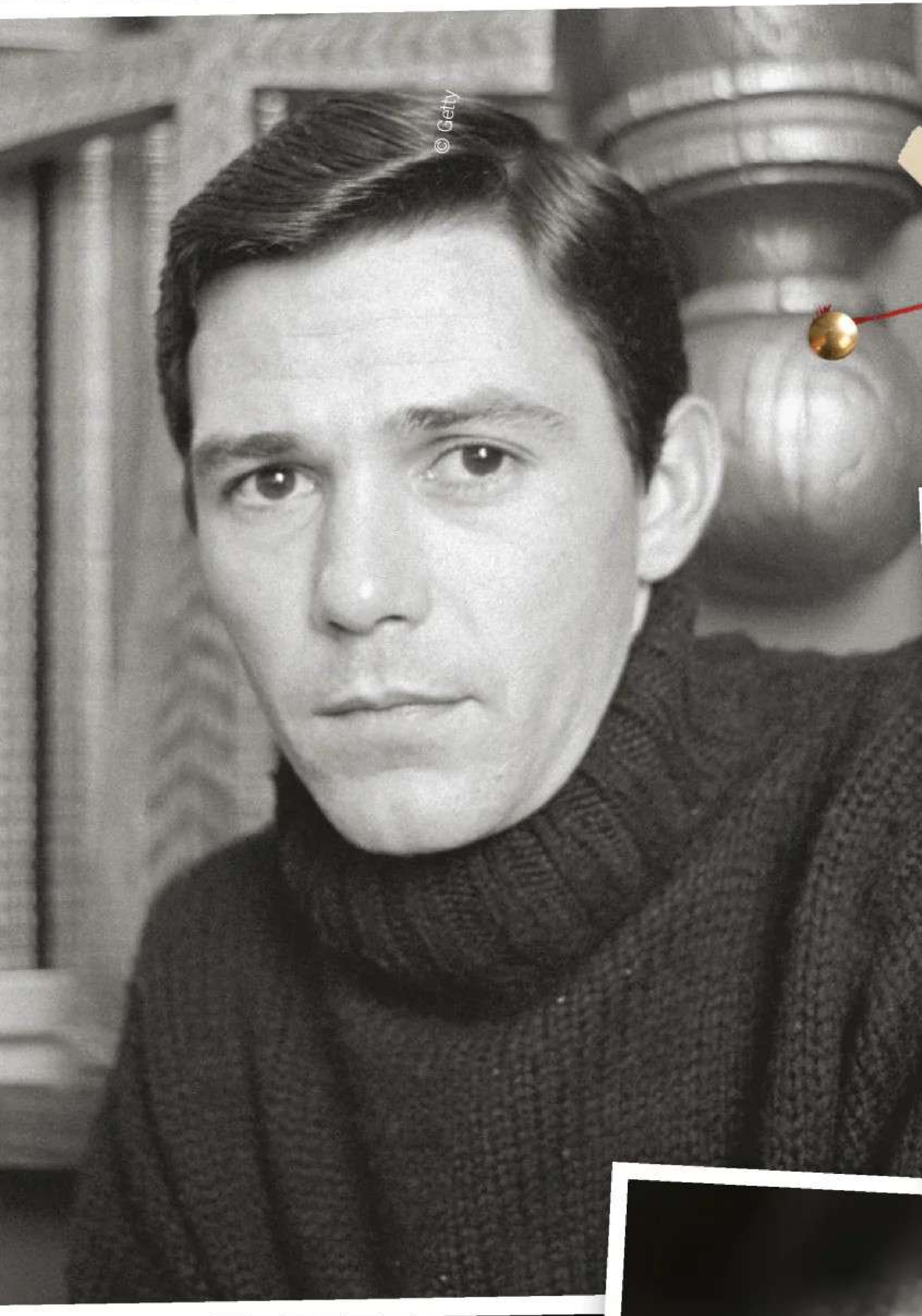
SHARON TATE

Born in 1943, Sharon Marie Tate had turned heads from the beginning, winning baby contests and beauty pageants. It was while attending school in Italy, where her father worked in army intelligence, that the 16 year old landed her first role as an extra. Hazel-eyed and with honey-blonde hair and a thin figure, she moved to Hollywood, winning a recurring role on the television show *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Movie roles soon followed: *Eye of the Devil*, *The Fearless Vampire Killers*, *Don't Make Waves*, *The Wrecking Crew*, and the cult classic *Valley of the Dolls*. Little was demanded of her except that she look beautiful; her true strength, a genuine gift for comedy, was largely ignored. On 20 January 1968 she married Roman Polanski, famed director of *Repulsion* and the coming *Rosemary's Baby*, at an impromptu ceremony in London. The Polanskis were a glittering couple, very much at the centre of life in swinging London and Hollywood, though Roman's roving eye caused Sharon much heartache. When she became pregnant in early 1969, she hoped that the baby would bring stability to the marriage. Sharon filmed her last movie, *12+1*, in Rome that spring before returning to Los Angeles. "My whole life has been decided by fate," she told a reporter that summer. "I know one thing – I've never planned anything that ever happened to me."

WOJCIECH FRYKOWSKI

Born in 1936, Wojciech Frykowski had met fellow Pole Roman Polanski in Lodz. Tall and handsome, Wojciech got the starring role in Polanski's short film *Mammals* and the pair became friends. When Polanski defected, so did Frykowski. Wojciech expected Roman to find him a job in Hollywood as a screenwriter, but Frykowski's minimal English ended the idea. Roman once described him as a man of "small talent but immense charm." Frykowski tried his hand at poetry, studied English, and continued to hope to make a name for himself. He became a hanger-on, moving through Polanski's enchanted circles, dabbling in drugs and content to live on the generosity of others, like coffee heiress Abigail Folger, with whom he quickly began a romance.





© Getty

ABIGAIL FOLGER

Born in 1943, Abigail Folger, called Gibbie by her friends, had grown up in privilege as heiress to the family's coffee fortune. Yet she cared deeply about social injustice and used her fortune to fund worthy causes, including the Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic in San Francisco, Democratic politics in Los Angeles, and racial integration. Her year-long relationship with Frykowski was uneasy. Like Sharon Tate, she found herself dominated and dictated to by a strong-willed Polish émigré with a roving eye. By August 1969 she confessed to her therapist that she hoped to break free of Frykowski and reclaim her life.

JAY SEBRING

Born Thomas Kummer in 1933, Jay Sebring changed his name when he came to Hollywood. Stylish, witty and with a love of fast cars, he began to make a name for himself as one of the first celebrity hair stylists. He opened his own salon and counted Kirk Douglas, Warren Beatty, Steve McQueen, Paul Newman and Jim Morrison of The Doors as regular customers. He had met Sharon Tate in 1964 and the couple were engaged until she fell in love with Polanski. Thereafter, Jay remained a devoted friend and most assumed that he was still in love with the actress. On the night that he died, he was still wearing Sharon's high school class ring.

STEVEN PARENT

Eighteen-year-old Steven Parent had the misfortune of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. In July 1969 the recent high school graduate, who worked two jobs to save money for college, had picked up a hitchhiking William Garretson, the young caretaker at 10050 Cielo Drive and delivered him to the estate. Garretson told him to come back any time: Parent returned just before midnight on 8 August, hoping to sell Garretson a clock radio.

LENO LABIANCA

Born in 1925 to Italian immigrants, Leno LaBianca owned the successful Gateway Market chain in Los Angeles. Leno had a taste for fast horses, a passion for gambling and an interest in rare coins. After divorcing his first wife, he'd married Rosemary Struthers and moved her and her young son Frank into a Spanish-style house on Waverly Drive in the Los Feliz district. By August of 1969, though, Leno was under increasing pressure over financial irregularities at Gateway and his gambling debts.

ROSEMARY LABIANCA

Born in 1929, dark-haired Rosemary Struthers first met Leno LaBianca while working as a hostess at the Los Feliz Inn. She had two children, including one from an extra-marital affair, but Leno was undeterred and the couple married. Rosemary did well in the stock market and operated a successful dress shop, but by August 1969 she was worried: someone had broken into their house on Waverly Drive several times, and both she and Leno wanted to sell it and move away quickly.

© Getty Images

door opening to the swimming pool. Abigail clawed at the doors as Krenwinkel stabbed her in the back and neck. The heiress somehow got the door open and ran toward the fence before Krenwinkel's knife finally sent her tumbling.

"Stop! Stop!" Abigail begged as Krenwinkel continued to stab. "I'm already dead." Watson, standing over Wojciech's body some 20 feet away, saw the struggle at the end of the lawn, jumped up and sprinted over to help. Krenwinkel held Abigail down as Watson slashed her face and stabbed her so many times that the blood turned her white nightgown red. Standing over Abigail's lifeless body, Watson spotted the lights of the guest house at the far end of the estate and ordered Krenwinkel to search it and kill anyone she found. Krenwinkel went off. The doors were locked, and she remembers pausing. "I knew this is wrong. It was like an echo from way back that said, 'Wait a minute, this has finally gone into total madness'."

Only Sharon Tate remained alive. Atkins had forced her on to the couch; the rope was still looped round her neck over the beam and Atkins held Sharon's arms as she pleaded for her life. "Please don't kill me! Please don't kill me! I don't want to die! I want to live! I want to have my baby! I want to have my baby!" But Atkins, who had left her own ten-month-old son back at Spahn Ranch, showed no mercy.

"Look, bitch," she told Sharon, "I don't care about you! I don't care if you're going to have a baby! You had better be ready. You're going to die, and I don't feel anything about it." Atkins later complained that Sharon had reminded her of "a store mannequin" who sounded "like an IBM machine. She kept begging and pleading and pleading and begging, and I got sick of listening to her."

BELOW Deputy District Attorney Vincent Bugliosi displays a large photograph of the nylon rope found around the necks of Sharon Tate and Jay Sebring

GRAND
ROOM
RECO

His black clothes now shining with blood, Watson re-entered the living room. Sharon again begged for her life, but Watson told her to shut up. She then asked them to take her with them when they left: they could keep her alive until she gave birth and they could then kill her. Watson said nothing. Finally, realising she was about to die, Sharon begged the killers to cut the baby from her and save its life. She was, Atkins remembered, "out of her mind".

Watson ordered Atkins to kill Sharon. When she hesitated he lunged forward, stabbing into her breast and then her arm as she tried to ward off the blows. Atkins struggled to hold her; Sharon seems to have tried to protect her stomach by turning away and thrusting it against the couch. This left her back exposed to Watson's knife, which came down eight times, piercing her lungs and chipping her ribs. She slumped. Atkins later bragged that she, too, had joined in the attack. "I felt so good the first time I stabbed her," she told a cellmate, "and when she screamed at me it did something to me, sent a rush through me, and I stabbed her again. I just kept stabbing her until she stopped screaming. It was just like going into nothing, going into air. It's like a sexual release. Especially when you see the blood spurting out. It's better than a climax."

Having suffered 16 stab wounds, Sharon crumpled to the floor, moaning, "Mother, mother!" as she died. Atkins saw that she had blood on her hands. She lifted her fingers and licked it off. "To taste death and yet give life," she told a friend. "Wow, what a trip!" The killers left the house and were on the driveway when Watson turned to Atkins and told her to go back to the house and leave a message in blood. "Write something that will shock the world," he ordered.

Atkins entered the now silent house, grabbed the beige towel that she had used to tie Wojciech's hands, and knelt beside Sharon's butchered body. "Her hair was covering her face and there were sounds coming from her body, like blood flowing into the body out of the heart." She touched the towel to Sharon's chest, went out onto the front porch, knelt in front of the white Dutch door, and wrote 'PIG' in blood on the bottom half before flinging the bloody towel back into the living room. As the killers pulled away, they left behind five dead bodies disfigured by seven gunshots, beatings, and 104 stab wounds. "I felt so elated," Atkins recalled, "tired, but at peace with myself."

The killers first learned the identities of their victims Saturday afternoon, when they watched a live news television broadcast at Spahn Ranch. There were giggles and laughs as the gruesome details were recounted. Watson bragged about how much 'fun' he'd had the previous night. But Manson was agitated. "Last night was too messy," he told his followers. "This time I'm going to show you how to do it." He again told Watson, Atkins, Krenwinkel and Kasabian to get a change of clothing and their knives, and he also picked Steve Grogan and Leslie Van Houten to join them. "I felt that what we were doing was a mission that needed to be done," Van Houten said. "I wanted to go. I knew that people would die."

This time Manson went along. Kasabian drove aimlessly; once, they stopped at a church when Manson said he wanted to go inside and kill the priest on the altar, but the door was locked. He then wanted to kill the driver of a car waiting next to them at a traffic light, but the signal changed before he could do so. He looked in the windows of several houses but always came back. Then his directions became specific: a year earlier, he and some of the Family had done drugs at a house

ABOVE
The LaBianca house on Waverly Drive in the Los Feliz district of Los Angeles after the gruesome murders were discovered

ABOVE RIGHT
Police search a hillside off Mulholland Drive in Hollywood Hills for evidence left by the deadly assassins

on Waverly Drive in the Los Feliz district. Its neighbour was isolated, set back atop a high lawn, and was likely owned by someone wealthy.

The house, in fact, belonged to Leno LaBianca, owner of the Gateway Market chain in Los Angeles. Leno and his second wife Rosemary had just returned an hour earlier from a holiday at Lake Isabella. It was 1.30 a.m. on Sunday 10 August when Manson and Watson walked into the house through an open terrace door. Leno, in his pyjamas, had dozed off on the living room couch but Manson prodded him awake. "Who are you? What do you want?" Leno asked.

"We're not going to hurt you," Manson assured him. "Just relax. Don't be afraid." Manson took a leather cord from around his neck and told Watson to tie Leno's hands behind his back while he searched the house. Manson found Rosemary in the bedroom; after letting her slip a dress over her nightgown, he led her into the living room and tied her hands. He then left. Before he did so, he pulled Watson aside and whispered, "Make sure the girls get to do some of it, both of them."

Back at the car, Manson told Krenwinkel and Van Houten to join Watson inside the residence. "Go do what Tex says," he told them. "Don't let them know that you are going to kill them." With that, Manson got back into the car and, together with Kasabian, Atkins and Grogan, drove off into the night.

Inside the LaBianca house, Watson told Krenwinkel and Van Houten to take Rosemary back into the bedroom. There, they stripped the pillows of their cases: one went over Rosemary's head, kept in place when Watson took a lamp from a table, unplugged it, and wrapped the cord around her neck. He took the other pillowcase to the living room and did the same thing with Leno.

No one said anything, but in the silence Leno could hear Krenwinkel and Van Houten rattling through the kitchen drawers, looking for weapons. Hearing this, Leno realised what was about to happen and screamed, "You're going to kill us, aren't you?" Watson told him to shut up, but Rosemary heard his cries and took them up. Watson told Krenwinkel and Van Houten to go and keep her quiet while he turned on the helpless Leno. He stabbed the struggling man repeatedly in the stomach and chest. "Don't stab me anymore!" Leno moaned. "I'm dead! I'm dead!" Watson took no notice. He stabbed Leno in the throat so violently that he broke off the blade of the steak knife he was using, leaving it lodged in Leno's windpipe. To finish the job, he grabbed a double-tined carving fork from the kitchen and stabbed Leno in the stomach over and over again.

Rosemary LaBianca, hearing her husband's screams – "horrible, guttural sounds" in the words of Van Houten – began to struggle with the women. "What are you doing to my husband?" she yelled. Van Houten tried to hold her down while Krenwinkel stabbed. The first blow hit Rosemary's collarbone and bent the knife. As Rosemary continued to struggle and scream, Krenwinkel ran to get Watson. When he entered, he found that Rosemary had escaped Van Houten's grip: head still covered by the pillowcase, she had backed into a corner, swinging the lamp blindly in a futile attempt to ward off the killers. Watson managed to stab her, and continued to do so as she fell to the floor. Krenwinkel helped, but Van Houten turned away. Finally Watson grabbed her, handed her a knife, led her back to the bedroom, and commanded, "Do something." She knelt down and stabbed Rosemary numerous times in the lower back; she later admitted that she had no idea if Rosemary had been alive at the time. Rosemary's autopsy revealed that one of the wounds in her lower back had been fatal, administered while she was still alive.

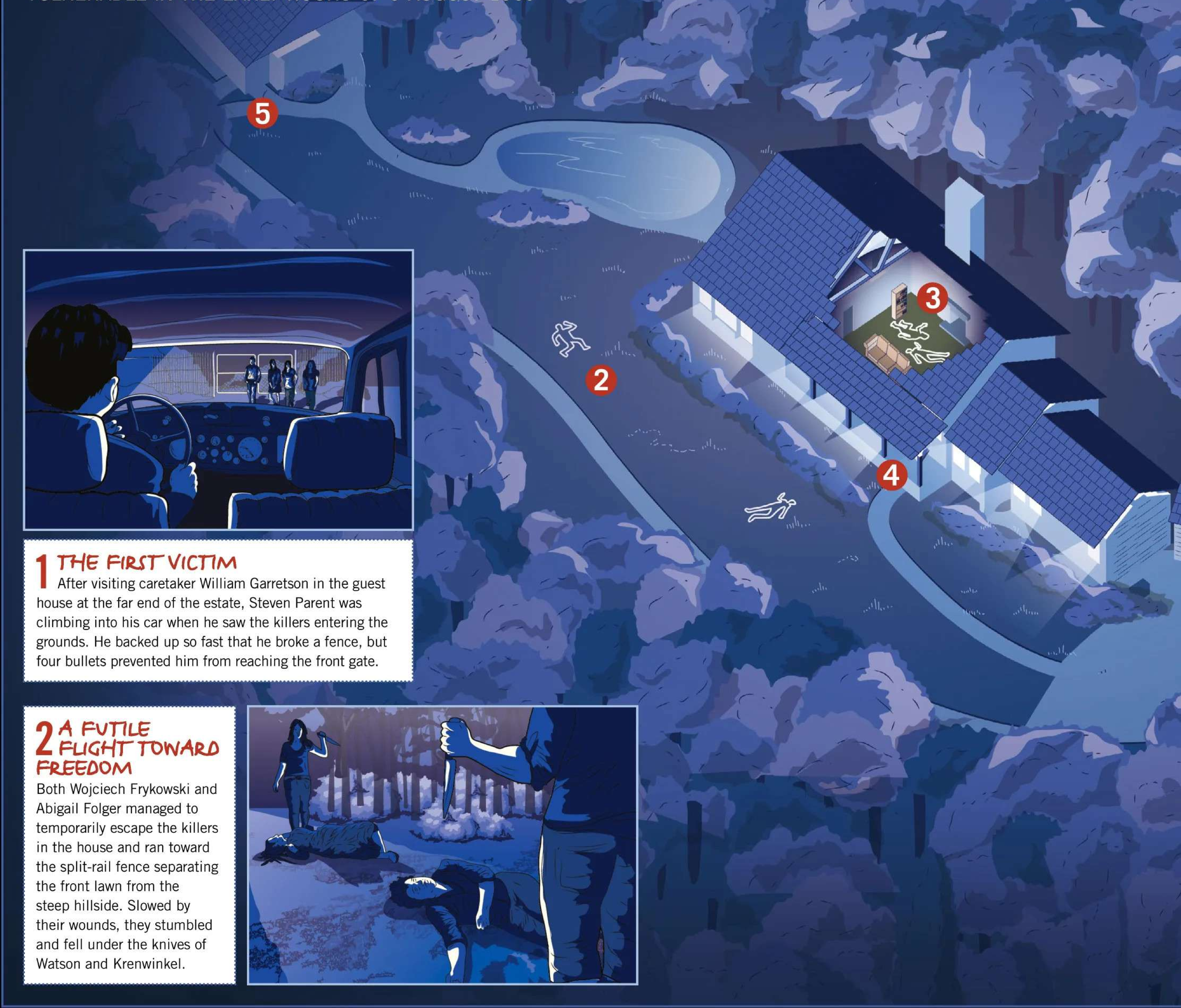
This time the killers were in no hurry to leave. Krenwinkel spotted the double-tined carving fork on the floor next to Leno's body, picked it up, and thrust it into his exposed stomach. Giving it a twang, she watched it wobble back and forth, fascinated. Watson took a knife and carved the word 'WAR' into Leno's stomach. Krenwinkel dipped some paper in the blood: on the walls of the living room she wrote 'RISE' and 'DEATH TO PIGS' and a misspelled 'HEALTER SKELTER' on the refrigerator doors. The trio showered together, helped themselves to snacks from the refrigerator, and fed the LaBiancas' dogs before finally leaving at dawn to hitchhike back to Spahn Ranch.

The bodies would not be discovered until late that night, when Rosemary's worried son Frank and daughter Suzan entered the silent house on Waverly Drive.

© Getty Images

SLAUGHTER IN BEVERLY HILLS

THE ESTATE AT 10050 CIELO DRIVE HAD ONCE SEEMED A HAVEN FROM THE WORLD; ITS ISOLATION LEFT ITS INHABITANTS VULNERABLE IN THE EARLY HOURS OF 9 AUGUST 1969

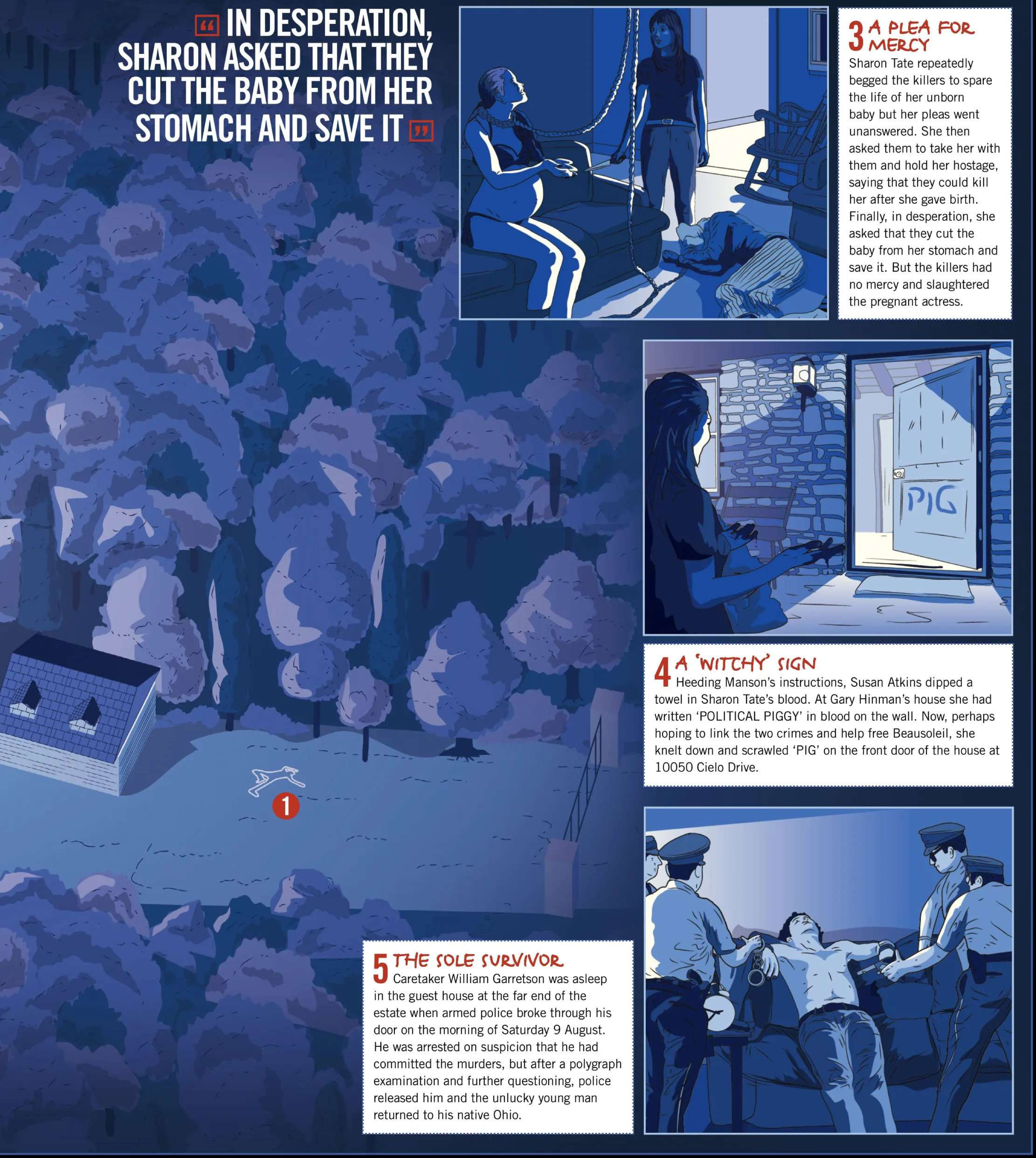


1 THE FIRST VICTIM

After visiting caretaker William Garretson in the guest house at the far end of the estate, Steven Parent was climbing into his car when he saw the killers entering the grounds. He backed up so fast that he broke a fence, but four bullets prevented him from reaching the front gate.

2 A FUTILE FLIGHT TOWARD FREEDOM

Both Wojciech Frykowski and Abigail Folger managed to temporarily escape the killers in the house and ran toward the split-rail fence separating the front lawn from the steep hillside. Slowed by their wounds, they stumbled and fell under the knives of Watson and Krenwinkel.



> “IN DESPERATION, SHARON ASKED THAT THEY CUT THE BABY FROM HER STOMACH AND SAVE IT”

3 A PLEA FOR MERCY

Sharon Tate repeatedly begged the killers to spare the life of her unborn baby but her pleas went unanswered. She then asked them to take her with them and hold her hostage, saying that they could kill her after she gave birth. Finally, in desperation, she asked that they cut the baby from her stomach and save it. But the killers had no mercy and slaughtered the pregnant actress.

4 A ‘WITCHY’ SIGN

Heeding Manson’s instructions, Susan Atkins dipped a towel in Sharon Tate’s blood. At Gary Hinman’s house she had written ‘POLITICAL PIGGY’ in blood on the wall. Now, perhaps hoping to link the two crimes and help free Beausoleil, she knelt down and scrawled ‘PIG’ on the front door of the house at 10050 Cielo Drive.

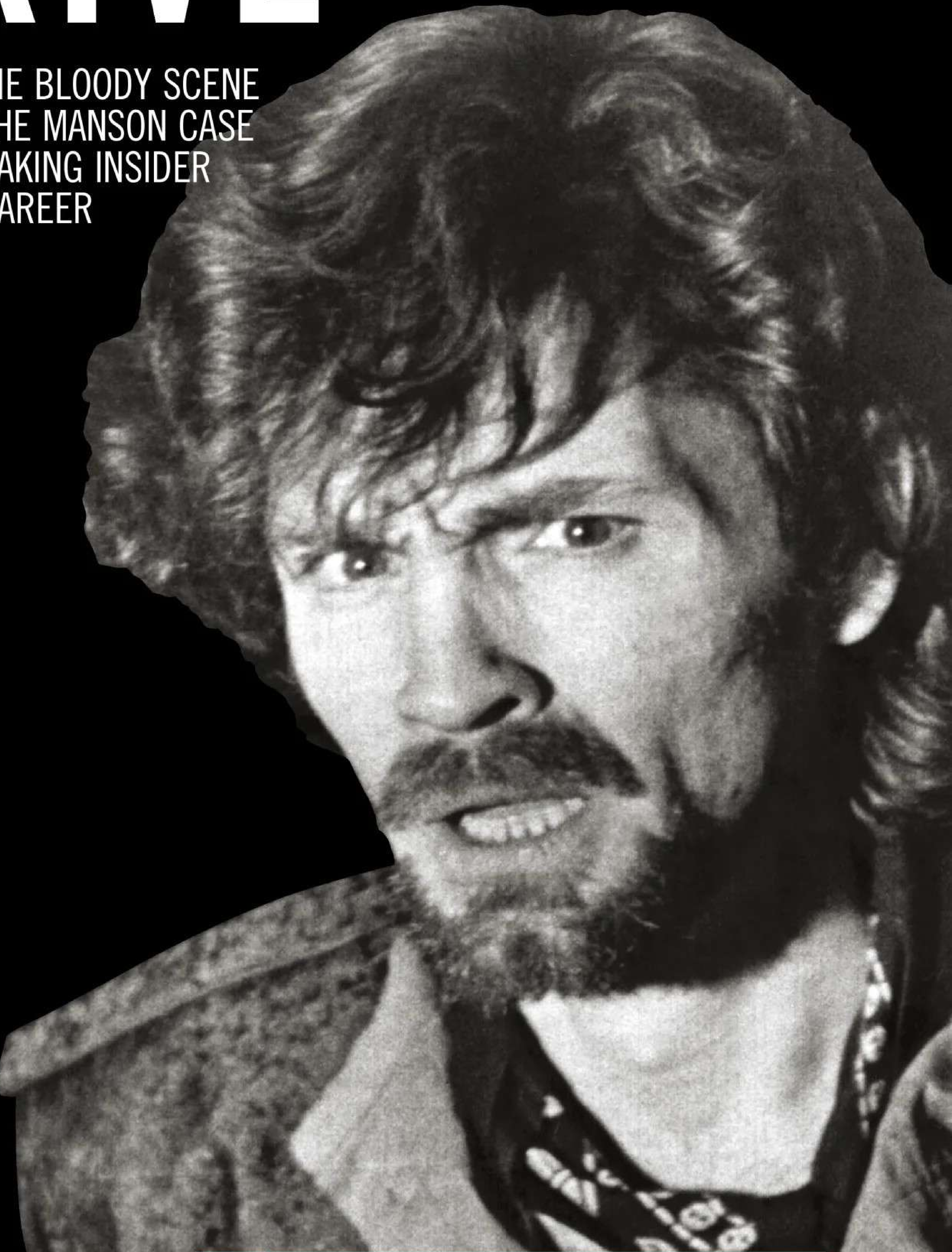
5 THE SOLE SURVIVOR

Caretaker William Garretson was asleep in the guest house at the far end of the estate when armed police broke through his door on the morning of Saturday 9 August. He was arrested on suspicion that he had committed the murders, but after a polygraph examination and further questioning, police released him and the unlucky young man returned to his native Ohio.

© Ed Crooks

EYEWITNESS TO CIELO DRIVE

IVOR DAVIS WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO WITNESS THE BLOODY SCENE OF THE TATE MANSION MURDERS. HE FOLLOWED THE MANSON CASE FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS, PROVIDING GROUNDBREAKING INSIDER CORRESPONDENCE THAT HELPED TO DEFINE HIS CAREER



I will never forget my brief encounter with Manson devotee Lynette 'Squeaky' Fromme when I saw her squatting on the street outside the courtroom on the first day of the trial in July 1970. She recognised me right away. We had talked at the Spahn Ranch seven months earlier and now my book, which painted Manson and his gang as a depraved band of killers, had been published. She greeted me with a friendly wave – and an angelic smile. "Hi, Ivor," she called out in that sing-song, butter-wouldn't-melt-in-her-mouth, emotionless voice. "Do you know what it feels like to have a razor-sharp knife slid down your throat?"

My sojourn into the lifestyle and inner workings of the Family grew, as weeks turned into months and then years. Manson and his mob just wouldn't go away. My pursuit of the story was to sweep me up on a strange and unique personal odyssey that stretched over almost half a century.

As time went by and the threats subsided, the trials came and went, and the case continued to obsess me like no other story I have ever encountered. I could not rid myself of those ghastly images. I carefully followed the circuitous trail of those convicted of the killings after spending almost a year covering the trial. I revisited the case, interviewing leading players in California, London and Paris. My unending assignment took me through a house of horrors, a journey that began with the destruction of the innocent lives of the pregnant actress Sharon Tate, fashionable Hollywood hairstylist Jay Sebring and their friends at a mansion hidden away on Cielo Drive, then a day later moved to a Los Angeles neighbourhood where the lives of Los Angeles businessman Leno LaBianca and his wife Rosemary were cut short.

Sunday 9 August 1969 was undoubtedly the most horrifying day in Winifred 'Winnie' Chapman's life. The Sun was trying hard to burn through the early morning Los Angeles haze as the 55-year-old housekeeper stepped off the bus at Santa Monica Boulevard and Canon Drive in Beverly Hills. The address was 10050 Cielo Drive. Chapman had been looking after the Polanski housekeeping needs for more than a year and was equally as thrilled as Tate to watch the spare bedroom being turned into a nursery. The corpses on the lawn first spotted by Winnie Chapman included Frykowski, 32, who had been shot four times, stabbed 51 times, and had suffered 13 blows to his head with a blunt instrument. He was an old friend of Polanski's from Poland and a wannabe screenwriter

BIO

IVOR ROBERT DAVIS

Investigative reporter and award-winning author Ivor Davis has been a correspondent for British newspapers for over 50 years. His career highlights include accompanying the Beatles on their U.S. tour, reporting the infamous Patty Hearst trial, and of course breaking the Tate-LaBianca murder story for the UK press in 1969.

with a penchant for hard drugs. He not only partook of them but sold them on the side to make pocket money. He had no visible means of support and sponged off the generosity of his live-in girlfriend, 'Gibby' Folger, the 25-year-old heiress to the famous coffee empire. Now her body lay a few feet away from his. She had been stabbed 28 times. Polanski had felt sorry for his Polish compatriot, inviting him and Folger to become near-permanent guests at Cielo.

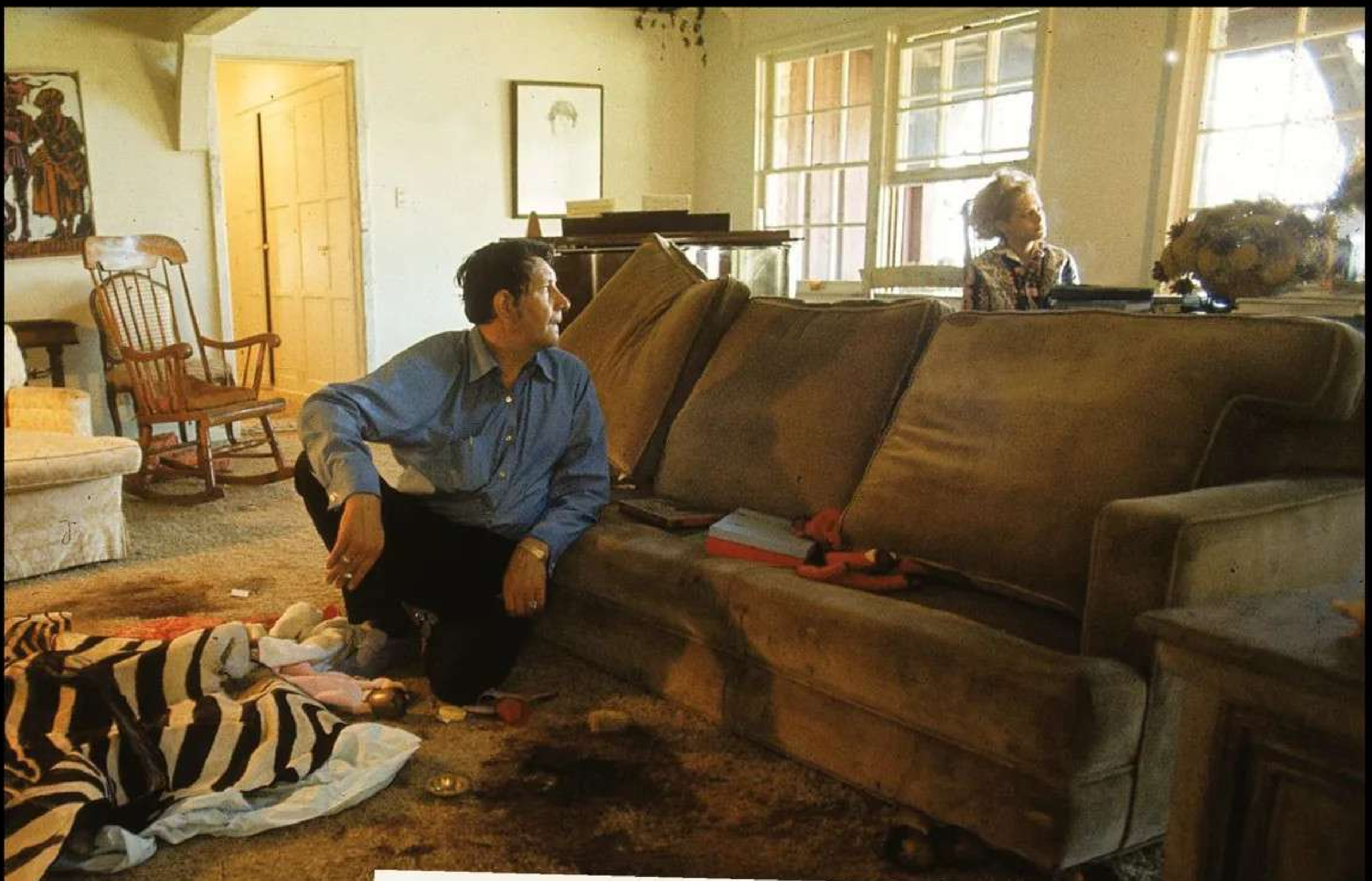
Slumped over the wheel of the white Rambler in the driveway was Steven Parent, an 18-year-old delivery boy who worked part time in a Los Angeles stereo shop and who simply happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was visiting [William] Garretson, having stopped by late at night to try to sell him a radio. Hailing from the blue-collar Southern California neighbourhood of El Monte, Parent's timing was tragic. He was at the wheel of his car and about to drive away when he was shot three times.

Shortly after 11.00 a.m. on that Sunday, I got a call from my London office. Reuters was reporting that five people had been murdered in a private Hollywood enclave, and they were saying it was drug related. I needed to get on the story, fast. I checked the local City News Service ticker tape for the address and raced the 15 miles over the canyons from my home in Studio City to Cielo.

I left the murder scene three times to call in my story to my editors in London. But I didn't have to go far to find a phone. I knew Cielo Drive. I had been there before. By a weird coincidence, a close friend actually lived on the street – a British friend who played for the same Los Angeles soccer team as I did. Phillip Freed, an executive for Volkswagen of America, and his American wife, Joyce, had a home a few steps away at 10210. Freed was also able to confirm with absolute certainty that his neighbours were the Polanskis and that they were notorious partygoers and party throwers. The father of two young daughters, he told me there were frequent loud parties at the estate, with music resounding throughout the canyon and scores of cars parked all the way down the long driveway almost reaching Benedict Canyon. "We never got invited and they kept to themselves," he said. "They did their own thing. This was not the kind of place where we had neighbourhood block parties. In fact, it was a bit of a revolving door. Lots of new faces. Many of the houses seemed to have new tenants every few weeks."

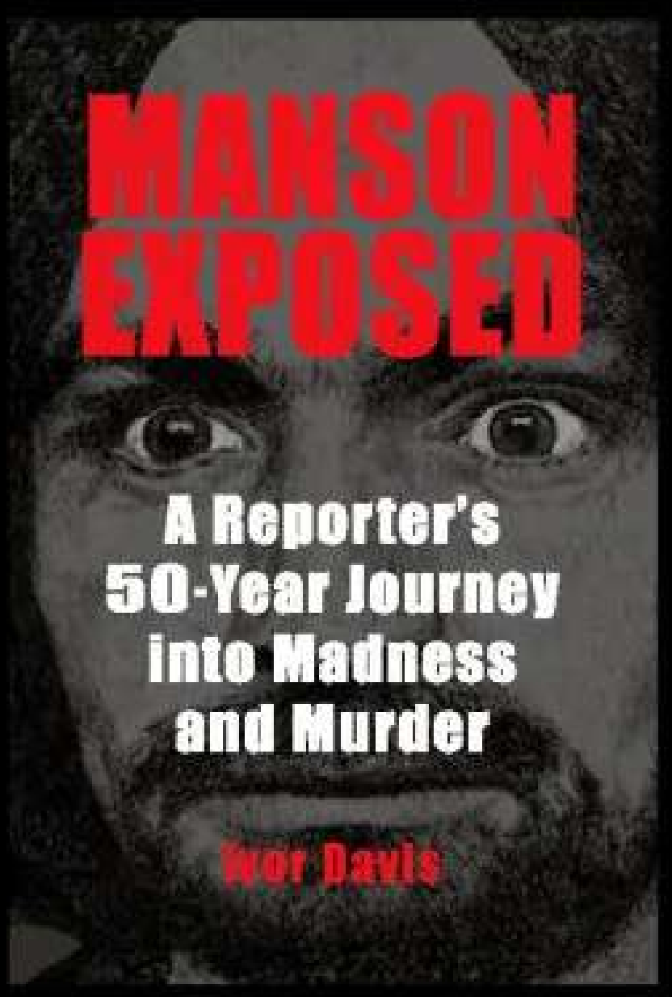
Somewhat surprisingly, Freed did not know a huge criminal investigation was unfolding under his very nose until his brother-in-law showed up around 10.45 a.m. and told him that scores of media were milling around the Tate driveway. "That Sunday, around 9:30 a.m., I was trying to get a last-minute suntan at my pool because I was due to fly home to London on Tuesday to visit my mother," he told me. "Suddenly a whole bunch of police and TV helicopters were swooping low over my house. I thought they were going to attack me. And I wondered what the hell was happening. And why were they taking pictures of me?"

"I THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO ATTACK ME… WHAT THE HELL WAS HAPPENING, AND WHY WERE THEY TAKING PICTURES OF ME?"



TOP
In the desperate race to find the killers, a clairvoyant was brought in to study the crime scene

ABOVE
Roman Polanski and his wife in happier times, around 1967



In his book *Manson Exposed: A Reporter's 50-Year Journey Into Madness and Murder* (ivordavisbooks.com) Ivor Davis spells out the real reason why Manson sent his young killers on their murderous missions.

After hanging out for a few hours outside the gates, I knew I had to file a story for my London paper's first edition. So I walked over to the Freed house – it was to become the perfect central headquarters for me and some of my colleagues, who desperately needed to find a telephone in the days before we carried them around in our pockets. It helped me tremendously in getting a leg up when reporting the story. I was able to finally confirm the identities of those living at the Cielo estate to my London editors. "Stay around," Deputy Foreign Editor Jim Nichol told me. "This is our front-page splash… we'll take everything you can give us. Your first-edition story runs to over 70 inches." For those unfamiliar with the newsroom term, it meant my story was going to be three times the normal length of what I usually filed.

As the Sun began to set, the 90-degree weather had cooled to the high 60s, and most of the media, having been kept mostly at bay, were ready to call it a day. But the crime team still had lots of work to do. Homicide detective Danny Galindo, who had worked on LA's legendary 1947 Black Dahlia case, took charge of the investigation; he was ordered to remain at the house all night long to make sure the crime scene was not tampered with.

The worst murder rampage in Los Angeles history was barely 12 hours old when news agencies began to clatter out more awful news. Another massacre, barely 15 miles away from the affluent mansions of Cielo Drive, had been carried out that night.

© Getty Images

PROPHETS OF DOOM

50 CHILDREN OF GOD

No amount of name changes will ever hide the sinister truth behind a cult that drew in famous faces and scarred countless lives

54 EXTRATERRESTRIAL RAPTURE

Desperate to join their UFO overlords in a better world, the followers of Heaven's Gate were willing to give their lives in the name of salvation

58 JONESTOWN DEATH CULT

Turn your back on the sins of the modern world and be part of a new jungle utopia? To the adherents of Jim Jones' movement, this was an offer they couldn't miss out on. And then their master requested more than their hard work and devotion, and his command would end in over 900 deaths

68 RED ALERT IN WASCO COUNTY

When out-of-towners began to pour into the sleepy county of Wasco with promises of work, food and spiritual enlightenment, many locals wondered what this burgeoning movement would bring to their town. The answer was political corruption, biological terror and assassination plots

74 PERISHED IN FLAMES

Inside the doomsday cult that literally went up in smoke

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Thou shalt not kill. If only the leaders of this bizarre group had adhered to the most important of the rules they'd sworn to follow

82 WAGING WAR ON THE WACO CULT

Having failed to convince the disciples of David Koresh to abandon their stronghold, U.S. authorities put an end to the infamous 50-day Waco siege in a storm of bullets, gas and bloodshed

88 DEATH CULT MURDERS

Killing your critics may silence them, but there is no guarantee that their legacy will also follow them to the grave, as one Japanese clan discovered

© Getty Images

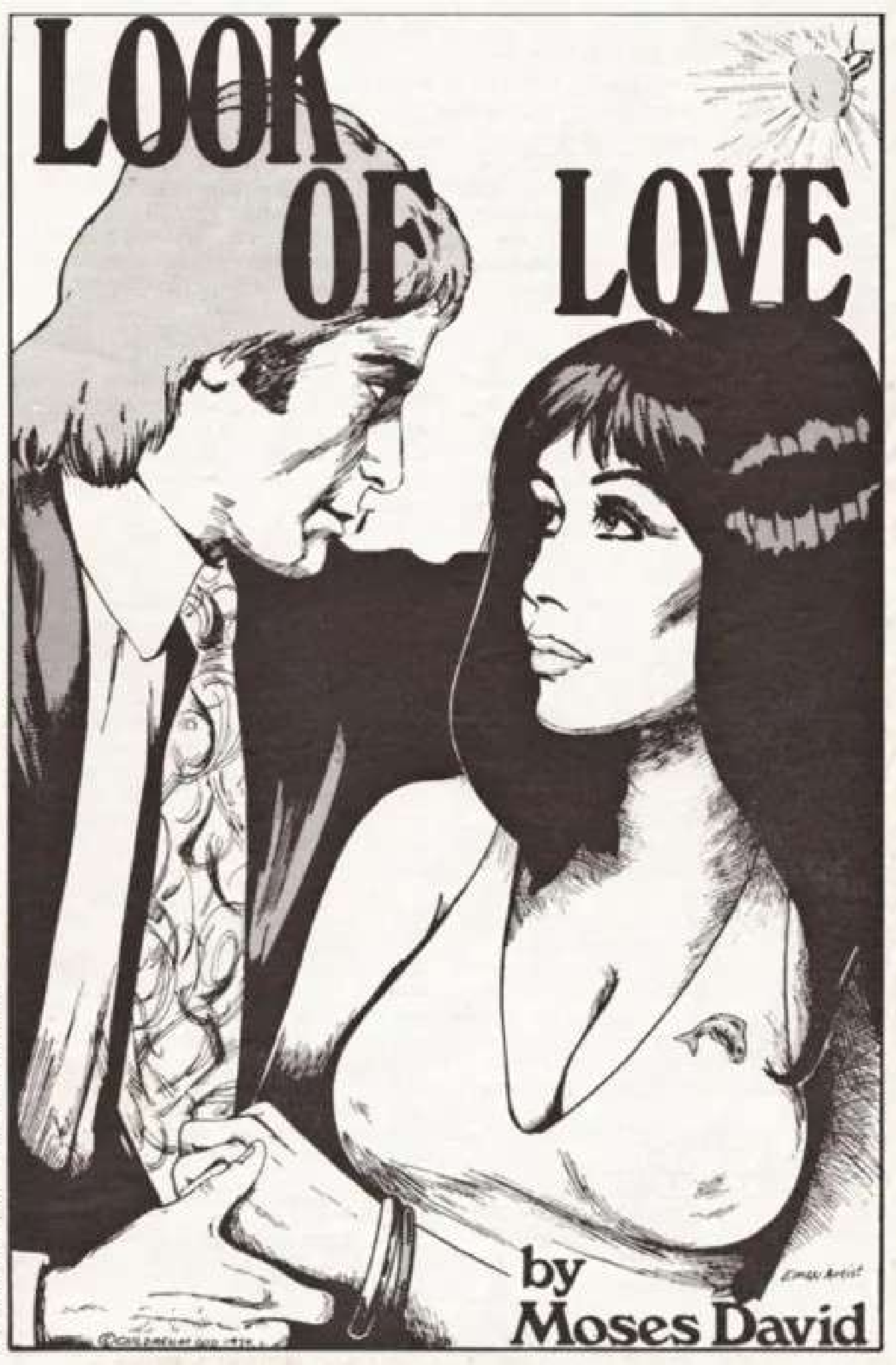
CHILDREN

DESPITE NUMEROUS REBRANDS, THE CHILDREN OF GOD CAN'T HIDE FROM ITS SHOCKING PAST, ONE CHECKERED WITH ALLEGATIONS OF MIND CONTROL INCEST AND PAEDOPHILIA

WORDS **ALICE PATTILLO**

In 1968, fourth-generation evangelical pastor David Berg and his siblings established a community of born-again Christian ex-hippies dubbed Jesus Freaks in a coffee shop in Huntington Beach, California. It would later become a worldwide movement first known as the Children of God.

The son of Virginia Berg, the nation's first female radio evangelist, David had served as her driver and assistant when she took to the road in the late 1930s and trained as a missionary for American Soul Clinic, founded by television evangelist Fred Jordan. After landing himself in trouble for his extreme views, which filtered into his impassioned sermons and aggressive marketing strategies, David left Fred Jordan's ministry in 1967 to return home to California, where his mother had been handing out peanut butter sandwiches and spreading the word of Jesus to a new breed of sinner: hippies. These bands of drop-outs, she believed, needed to be saved, but her son took a different view. They shared similar sentiments to David when it came to the evils of a "corrupt" mainstream society. David was dead set on starting a revolution, and now he'd found his followers.



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JESUS FREAKS

The group, known as Teens For Christ, gained momentum thanks to David's tactic of using music to attract new members and mixing traditional evangelism with elements of 1960s counterculture. He had fashioned himself as a 'cool' hippie preacher, growing his hair and beard long, donning a beret, calling himself "Father" and being addressed by his growing number of followers as "Dad". David's followers turned over all their possessions, quit their jobs, rejected their formal education, turned their backs on drugs and even cut ties with their families to serve God full-time as missionaries. David encouraged his followers to live communally just like early Christians, using the Bible's Book of Acts as a basis, as well as emphasising the end of the world rhetoric found in the Book of Revelation, based upon his mother's 'prophecies'. According to Virginia, the 'End Time' was nigh, the Antichrist would rise, America would be punished and David was the only one with the ability to forecast the second coming of Christ. David prophesied the Second Coming of Jesus would occur in 1993, as well as an earthquake in California in 1969 and the Great Tribulation in 1989. None came to pass.

GOD'S CHILDREN

At first, David's band of misfits garnered positive attention for swapping drugs for Jesus, leading one journalist to label the group "Children of God", a moniker David embraced and adopted as their official name. It was at this point that the group began to expand. David began playing matchmaker to his followers, partnering them up so that they could go on the road as married couples and establish new factions, even setting up his own kids. His disciples spread across the U.S. and Canada, prompting one journalist to liken David to the biblical Moses. David quickly adopted the name and began referring to himself as "Moses David" (then later as "Mo"), masquerading as a great saviour. He then instructed all of his followers to adopt a biblical name.

COMMUNAL CULT

With more and more members joining, David set up a commune in Texas in 1970. He ran it like a military-style bootcamp. Each member had chores that included construction, cleaning and cooking, time for prayer and reading and memorising the scripture. It was expected that followers memorise up to 300 verses in the first three months. David sent teams across the country to gather even more recruits. It was thanks to this martial-like approach and the cut-all-ties doctrine that The Children of God began to be labelled as a cult. Angry parents of runaway youngsters clocked on to David's problematic influence and claimed he was brainwashing their children, with many going as far as alerting authorities and hiring professional deprogrammers, while former followers said their mail and phone calls were being censored. However, this didn't deter the hubristic David,

OF GOD

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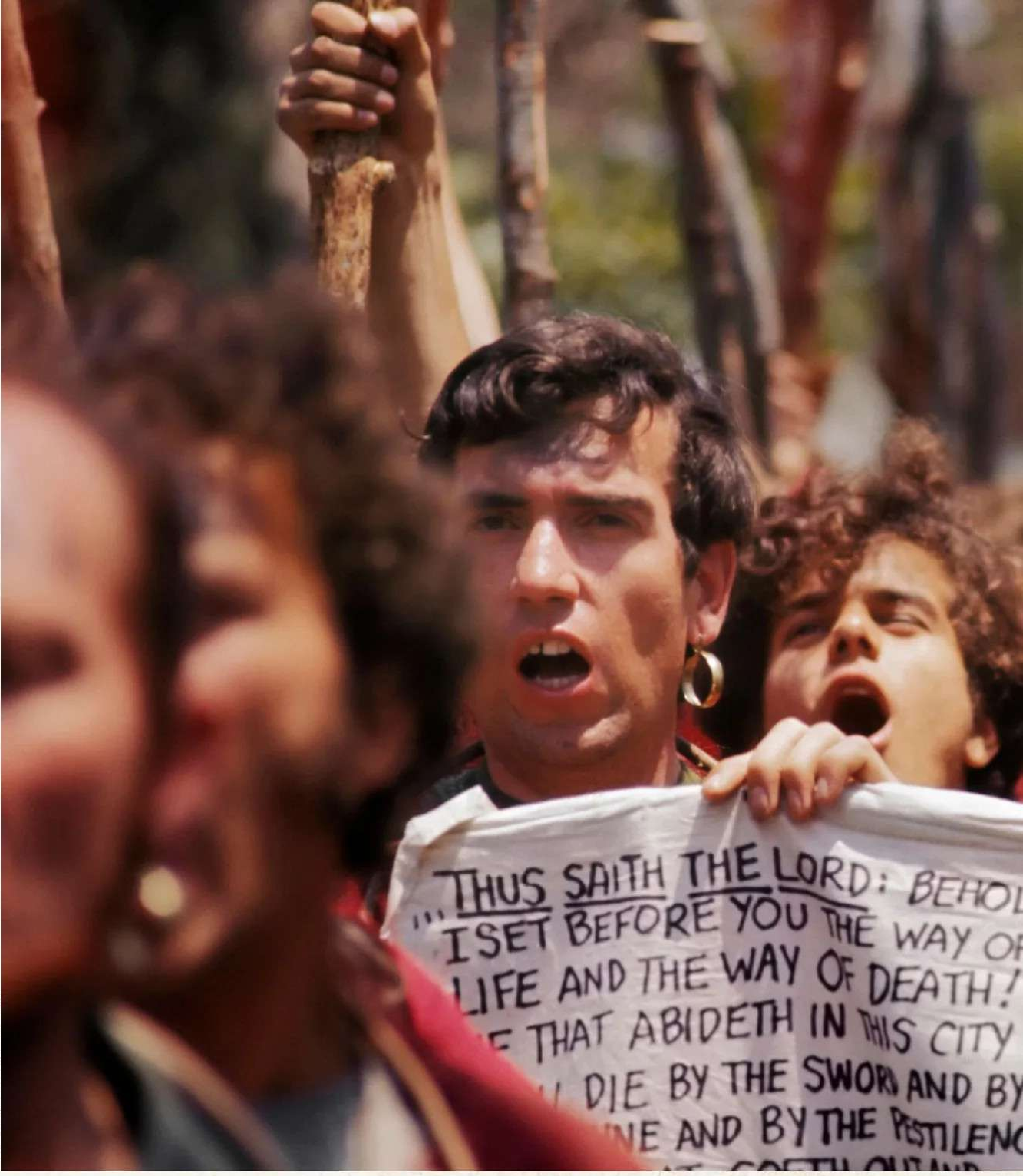


THUS SAITH THE LORD: BEHOL
I SET BEFORE YOU THE WAY OF
LIFE AND THE WAY OF DEATH!
THAT ABIDETH IN THIS CITY
DIE BY THE SWORD AND BY
NE AND BY THE PESTILENC

© Alamy / William Warren

“AS MORE MEMBERS LEFT, MORE CLAIMS OF ABUSE CAME TO THE SURFACE”

who had allegedly received a message from God himself to send missionaries further afield. But before he would send his top devotees into more “fruitful fields” he told them of a few changes to the rules.

THE LAW OF LOVE

In late 1971 the group expanded into Europe, and by 1972 even David himself had set up shop in London, England, escaping the watchful eye of U.S. law, who were investigating the Children of God for tax fraud and physical and mental coercion, among other accusations. He communicated with his disciples via the *Mo Letters* – illustrated comic strips that preached David's agenda. Through these letters he urged his followers to flee “doomed” America, sparking a mass exodus from the United States. By the mid-70s, there were reportedly 2,400 disciples and more than 130 colonies across locations in Europe, Asia, Latin America, New Zealand and Australia, as well as small communes remaining in every state of the union. Another early *Mo Letter*, entitled ‘One Wife’, explained a new “Law of Love” to his global flock of followers. It stated that it was the will of God that wives were to be shared and willing to do anything asked of them. Disciples began sexually sharing one another within their households, typically made up of four or five families per home, with adults and children often sleeping communally. It was only the beginning of the cult's official deviation from societal sexual norms, which would soon descend into illegal territory.

FLIRTY FISHING

David and his mistress-turned-wife Karen Zerby, known as Mama Maria, had started experimenting with a new form of recruitment in 1973 while living in London. Maria would head off to nightclubs, seduce men, lure them back home, have sex with them and then introduce them to her husband, who would pitch God to them. David dubbed it “Flirty Fishing”. He explained to his top disciples that female disciples were the “bait” to attract men in need of salvation, thereby gaining them new followers and, perhaps more importantly, monetary donations and political support. According to David, “sex is a bodily need as great as hunger or shelter” and in the same way as Jesus would feed people prior to teaching them, “the women have to satisfy a man's sexual desire before they are ready to hear about Jesus”.

Concerned that English society would be critical of Flirty Fishing, David relocated to the Canary Islands. Over the next year or two he began incorporating more and more sexually explicit content into his letters in order to prepare his disciples for the controversial new Flirty Fishing commandment, until finally in 1976 he revealed his intentions. Many happily married couples were understandably reluctant, but the majority complied, showing complete devotion to David. After an undercover photographer revealed Flirty Fishing to the world in 1977, local authorities swept through David's home, arresting some of the women for prostitution. David escaped to Barcelona before they could charge him as a pimp. After laying low for a while, in 1978 David fired all his lead disciples, including his own family members, and rebranded his global movement “The Family of Love” in a bid to distance himself from the run-ins with the law. Despite all of this, Flirty Fishing was more rampant than ever, becoming common practice, with some flirty fishers using escort agencies. And the cult was still growing. In 1983, it reportedly had more than 10,000 members living within 1,642 homes across the world. During this time its members enjoyed more freedom than ever before, but David's influence still reigned over them through his constant letters. By 1987 Flirty Fishing was reportedly banned, largely due to the burgeoning AIDS crisis and the Family's opposition to birth control.

CHILD ABUSE, INCEST AND PAEDOPHILIA

In 1982, The Family of Love rebranded again, this time shortening its name to The Family (not to be confused with the Australian cult of the same name, or Charles Manson's cohort). In 1984, David's daughter Deborah Berg, who had left the Children of God in the late 70s, published her first- hand account of life within the cult. Title *The Children of God: The Inside Story*, it revealed that her father had propositioned her for sex numerous times and had engaged in an incestuous relationship with her sister, David's daughter Faith.

As more and more members left, more and more claims of abuse came to the surface, from sexual misconduct and rape to severe corporal punishment and using prison tactics to discipline children. In the mid-80s, The Family sent out an urgent memorandum to members to “remind” them that any sexual activities between adults and children are strictly forbidden after growing concerns from the outside world, but for many members this was too little too late.

David's *Mo Letters* had been sanctioning sex between children and adults for years. While official inquiries at the

NEVER
D CHURCH BU
OR YOURSEL

ABOVE David's followers were urged to rally against the "corrupt system"

time found no evidence of child abuse, David's 'My Little Fish' letter accused children of "come hither looks", depicted sex between children and children and adults, and he was quoted as saying that he advocated child sex and child brides. David believed that "God created boys and girls able to have children by about 12 years of age." The cult conditioned their children into a world where sex was forcibly inflicted upon them from birth under the guise that it was natural and that they were simply encouraging children to explore life from a young age. Many ex-members have recalled girls as young as three years old being forced to "marry" David and children being involved in communal orgies. According to ex-Family International member Michael Young, "The Law of Love is a doctrine that's meant to justify and conceal sexual exploitation."

MURDER AND SUICIDE

In 1975 Maria had given birth to a son in the Canary Islands, a direct result of the Flirty Fishing practice. Adopted by David and dubbed "Davidito"' or "The Prince", he was hailed as the new messiah. Later escaping the cult and adopting the name Ricky Rodriguez, he revealed that at just ten months old he was subjected to sexual abuse, documented in *The Davidito Book*, which contained images of Ricky's nannies - naked teenage girls and women - undressing the child and sexually suggestive captions. The abuse continued into his teens, when he was forced to sleep with numerous women in the group as part of his "teen training" to prepare him for leadership. Ricky also accused his adoptive father of raping and sexually abusing his own female grandchildren.

The abuse he had suffered with the encouragement of his own parents and the guilt he felt for being groomed as the next leader of a cult that was rife with so much mistreatment proved too much for Ricky to handle. In 2005, when attempting to track down his mother, he murdered one of his nannies, Maria's secretary Angela M. Smith, in an act of revenge by stabbing her in the arm repeatedly and then slitting her throat. He then left his home and called several family members and his girlfriend, confessing to the latter that the murder was "the hardest thing I ever did in my life". At around 2 a.m. the next morning he shot himself in the head.

Following Ricky's death, more ex-cult members came forward with allegations of their own sexual abuse. Death by suicide of former Children of God members is tragically common. Ricky was the 30th ex-member within his peer group to commit suicide. The majority of those who were brought up within the cult were subjected to sexual abuse and unable to achieve closure or gain restitution due to the very nature of the cult and the statute of limitations. Ricky's tragic story prompted cult researcher Rick Alan Ross to describe The Children of God as "one of the most horrifically abusive and destructive cults in American history".

THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL

By the early 1990s, abuse allegations had finally started to catch up with David. He fled to Portugal and died in 1994 before he could be convicted of any charges. Maria took the lead of The Family after his death, and in 1995 she established the Love Charter, redefining the rules of the group. In 2004 the group changed its name once again, adopting the title The Family International, and in 2010 it officially disbanded its communes. The Family International continues online, as a community of reportedly 1,450 members all around the world.

FAMOUS FOLLOWERS

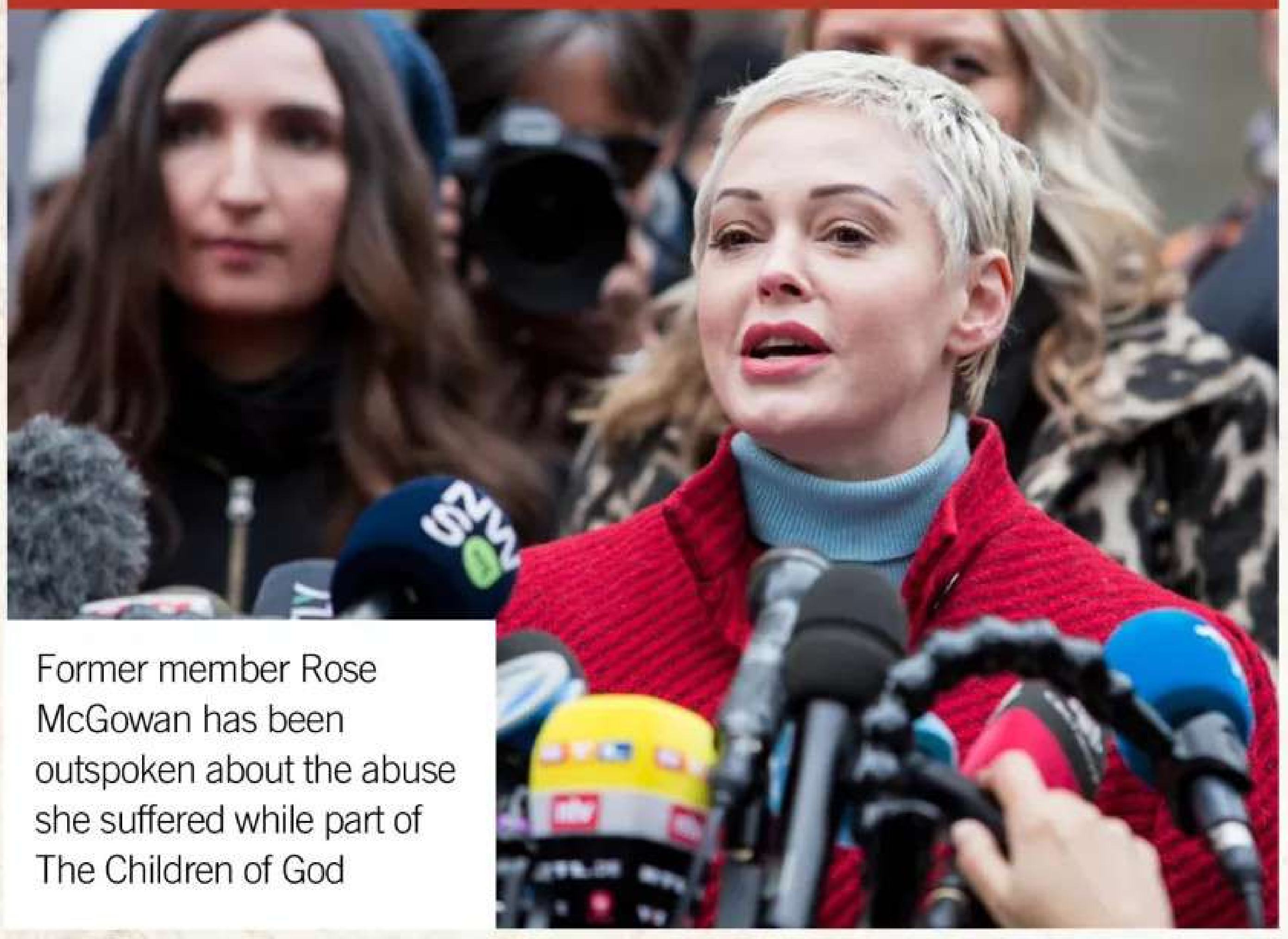
BEING FOUNDED IN CALIFORNIA AT THE HEIGHT OF THE HIPPIE MOVEMENT, THE CHILDREN OF GOD ATTRACTED SOME NOTABLE NAMES TO JOIN ITS RANKS

At its height during the mid-70s, The Children of God had thousands of followers, including Jeremy Spencer of Fleetwood Mac fame, the Phoenix family (parents of River and Joaquin Phoenix) and Rose McGowan.

Jeremy Spencer joined The Children of God in 1971, prompting his departure from Fleetwood Mac. Jeremy continued to produce music from within the cult and is a member to this day. His children left the organisation, later speaking to the *Guardian* about their upbringing within the cult. Jeremy's son Nat commented, "Dad will be in till he dies",his sibling Jez adding that "He's far too proud to admit he's wrong."

The Phoenix family joined The Children of God in 1973, when the late actor River Phoenix was merely three years old. He and three of his younger siblings – Rain, Joaquin and Liberty – were brought up in a commune in South America until their parents left the organisation in 1977, reportedly in response to "Flirty Fishing". River's first sexual experience was at age four, reportedly being forced to lose his virginity to other cult kids, an experience that had a profound and detrimental effect on the young actor, who later struggled with both drug and sex addiction before tragically overdosing on a night out in Hollywood at age 23.

Actress and 'MeToo' spokeswoman Rose McGowan was born to American parents in a commune in Italy, eventually escaping at the age of nine. Rose's father illustrated David's preachy comic books, known as tracts, and caught wind of the group advocating child-adult sex, prompting him to leave. Speaking about The Children of God to *People* magazine, McGowan explained, "Like in most cults, you were cut off from your [outside] family. There were no newspapers, no television. You were kept in the dark so you would obey." She continued to explain how it influenced her, igniting her inner feminist: "I remember watching how the [cult's] men were with the women, and at a very early age I decided I did not want to be like them. They were basically there to serve the men sexually, you were allowed to have more than one wife."



Former member Rose McGowan has been outspoken about the abuse she suffered while part of The Children of God

© Getty Images / Dianna Whitley

EXTRATERRESTRIAL RAPTURE

HEAVEN'S GATE BELIEVED IN AN END TIME WHEN UFOS WOULD TAKE THE FAITHFUL OFF EARTH, BUT IT TOOK A CRITICAL EVENT FOR THE CULT TO TURN DEADLY

WORDS **BEN BIGGS**

By 22 March 1997, the great comet Hale-Bopp had become a firm feature of the skies for the entire Northern Hemisphere. Its ice-blue and rusty yellow twin tails were a breathtaking sight on a clear evening, with casual stargazers and veteran astronomers alike captivated by this unusual visitor to our Solar System on its approach to Earth. Astrophotographers took long-exposure images in the brisk spring night while scientists made detailed observations in their cosy observatories, safe in the knowledge that Hale-Bopp was going to be as sure a night-sky sight as the Moon for many months more.

For everyone, it was a rare time to be alive – especially so for a group of uniformed observers in San Diego County, California, who were having a final, furtive gaze at the comet before they turned in. They recorded video messages in their rented Rancho Santa Fe mansion, expressing their joy and thanks to "Ti" and "Do": "This is the happiest day of my life", "I couldn't be happier about what we are about to do", and, "I do this of my own free will". Then they each ate apple sauce laced with the sedative phenobarbital, washed the lethal concoction down with vodka, lay on their bunks, pulled plastic bags over their heads and one by one, exited their vehicles and ascended to the UFO they believed hid in the long wake of the comet.

AWAY TEAM

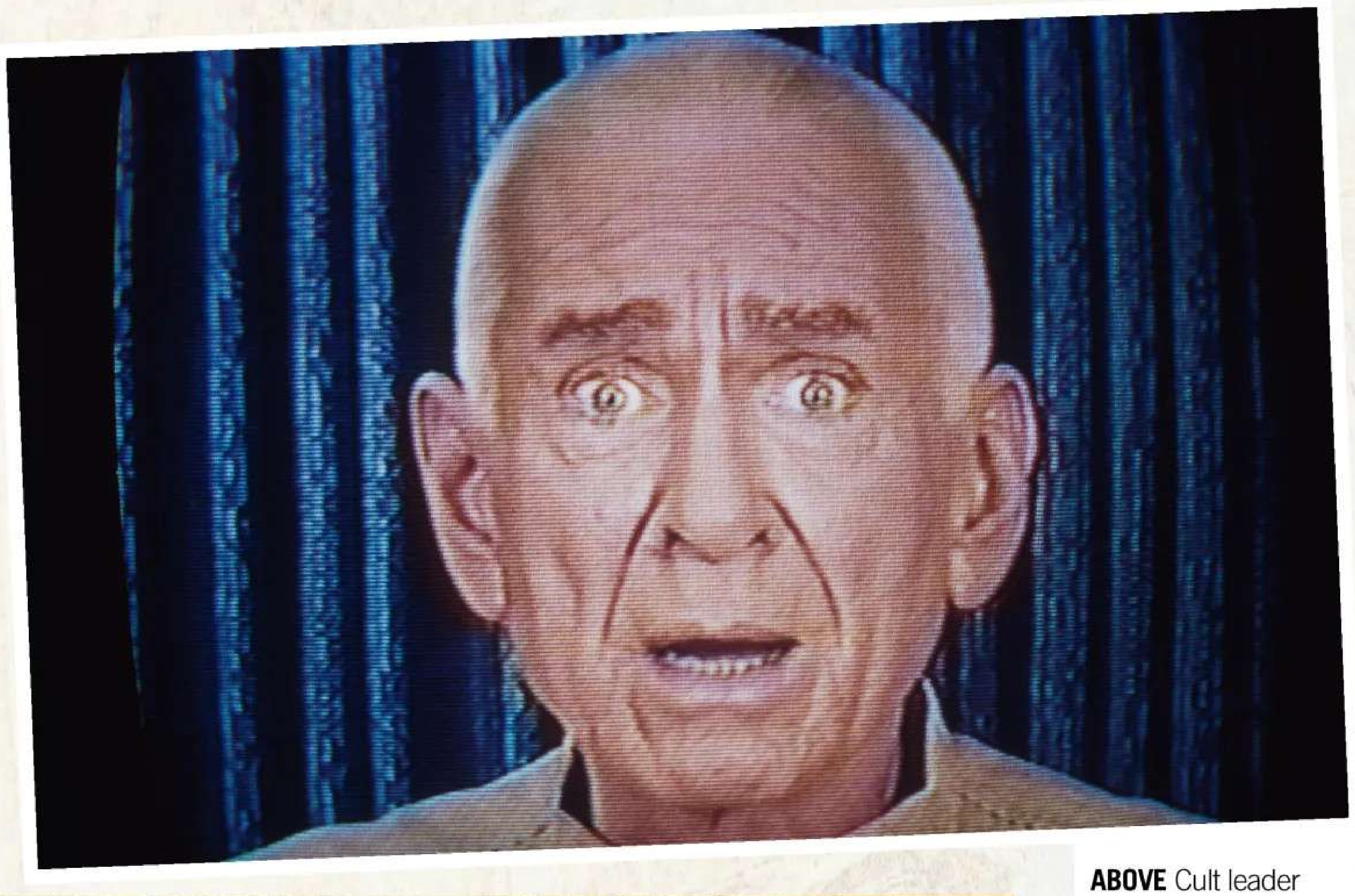
San Diego County Sheriff's Department first gained access to the mansion four days later on Wednesday 26 March, following up an alarming call from a nearby payphone. "This is regarding a mass suicide," said the caller, "I can give you the address."

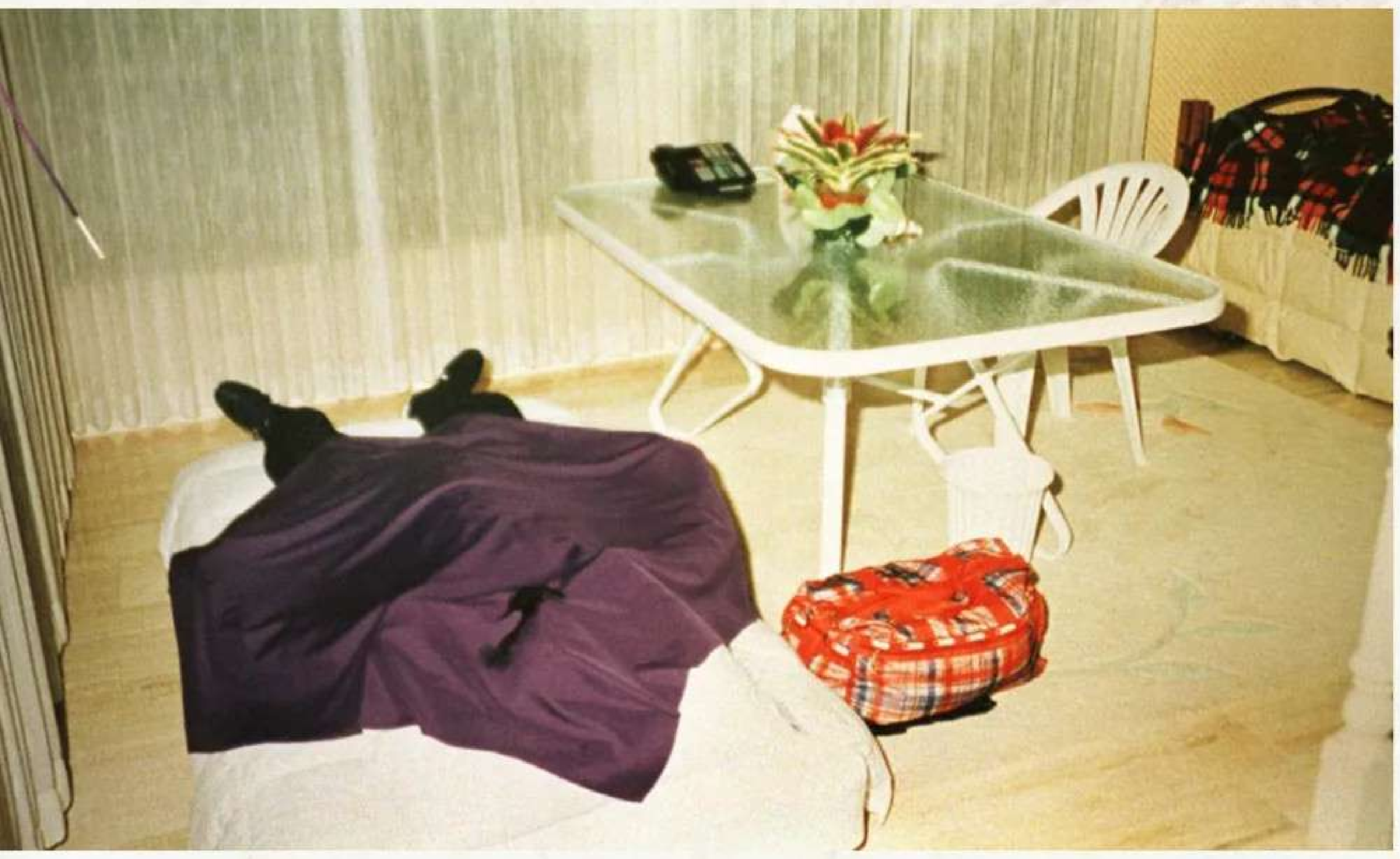
Despite the forewarning, Deputy Robert Brunk wasn't prepared for the quietly disturbing scenes beyond the double doors: men and women with army-style buzzcuts lay in cots, on mattresses or on the floor underneath silky purple shrouds, lining long hallways or on bunks inside the mansion's many rooms. They were all clad in the same black jogging bottoms and collarless shirts, wearing black Nike Decades sneakers with their distinctive white tick.

Parts of the property had taken on the unmistakable sickly sweet smell of putrefaction, and Deputy Brunk didn't hesitate to call in the cavalry. They discovered packed bags at the end of each bed, matching "Heaven's Gate Away Team" badges on the uniforms and a $5 bill with three quarter coins tucked into their pockets.

BELOW Deceased members of the group lie under purple blankets in the Heaven's Gate mansion

© Getty Images / Alamy





ABOVE Cult leader Marshall Herff Applewhite made videos for his initiates, including a 12-part series that was broadcast in 1992

LEFT The mass suicide was carefully orchestrated in waves, with some members helping others to 'exit their vehicles' and draping their bodies with purple shrouds before committing suicide themselves

Over the following 24 hours, San Diego County officers and forensics filed in and out of the mansion, counting the cost in human life. There were 18 men and 21 women, for a total of 39 dead: dozens of white ticks pointing skyward like daisies pushing up out of a black lawn; dozens of pallid, peaceful faces awaiting ascension into pure science fiction; dozens of bloodless corpses, young and old, murdered by the will of a repressed homosexual man who, in his own videotaped epitaph, said he did "in all honesty hate this world".

THE LIFE OF "DO"

Marshall Herff Applewhite, Jr., led what seemed like a very unremarkable existence – on paper, at least – for more than half his life. He was born in 1931 in Texas and, as the son of a presbyterian minister, he was a devout Christian from an early age. He studied philosophy at university, followed by a stint at a presbyterian seminary where he studied theology in the hope of following in his father's footsteps and becoming a minister. Those ambitions were short-lived: instead, he left the seminary to pursue a career in teaching and music. He married and had two children with Anne Pearce, was drafted into the army for two years in 1954, and for the next ten years, he was the epitome of the young, white American family demographic. Then in 1964 came a turning point: he was fired from his position as choral director at the University of Alabama for pursuing a relationship with a male student. His wife divorced him shortly after, and when his father learned of his homosexuality he cut him off. According to Anne, in a statement to the *New York Times* in April 1997, Applewhite had shown no interest in the occult for the duration of their marriage, that the man who had killed himself along with 38 others wasn't the same person she knew, and she hadn't heard from him since they separated. She had no idea of the trajectory his life had taken over the previous 30 years.

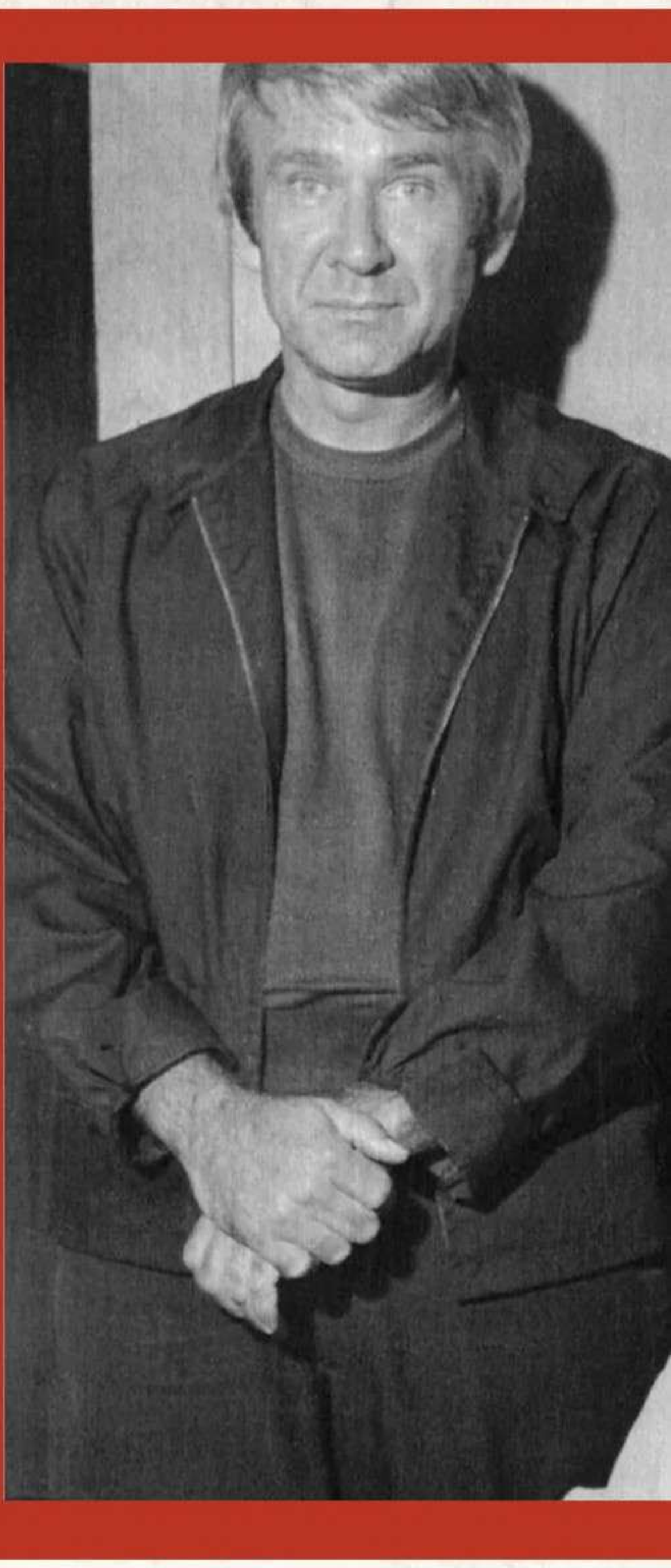
A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

Applewhite met Bonnie Nettles in 1972, a nurse at the psychiatric hospital where he hoped to cure himself of his unwanted sexual urges. Their mutual and compatible interests in religion and the paranormal drew them together. Applewhite felt he had known Nettles for a lifetime and believed that he had known her in a past life. Nettles told Applewhite that their meeting had been prophesied by extraterrestrial beings on a higher level than humans. Nettles separated from her husband and lost custody of her two children soon after she met Applewhite, and the two built the rudiments of the Heaven's Gate doctrine, steeped in New Testament prophecy and an ardent belief in extraterrestrials.

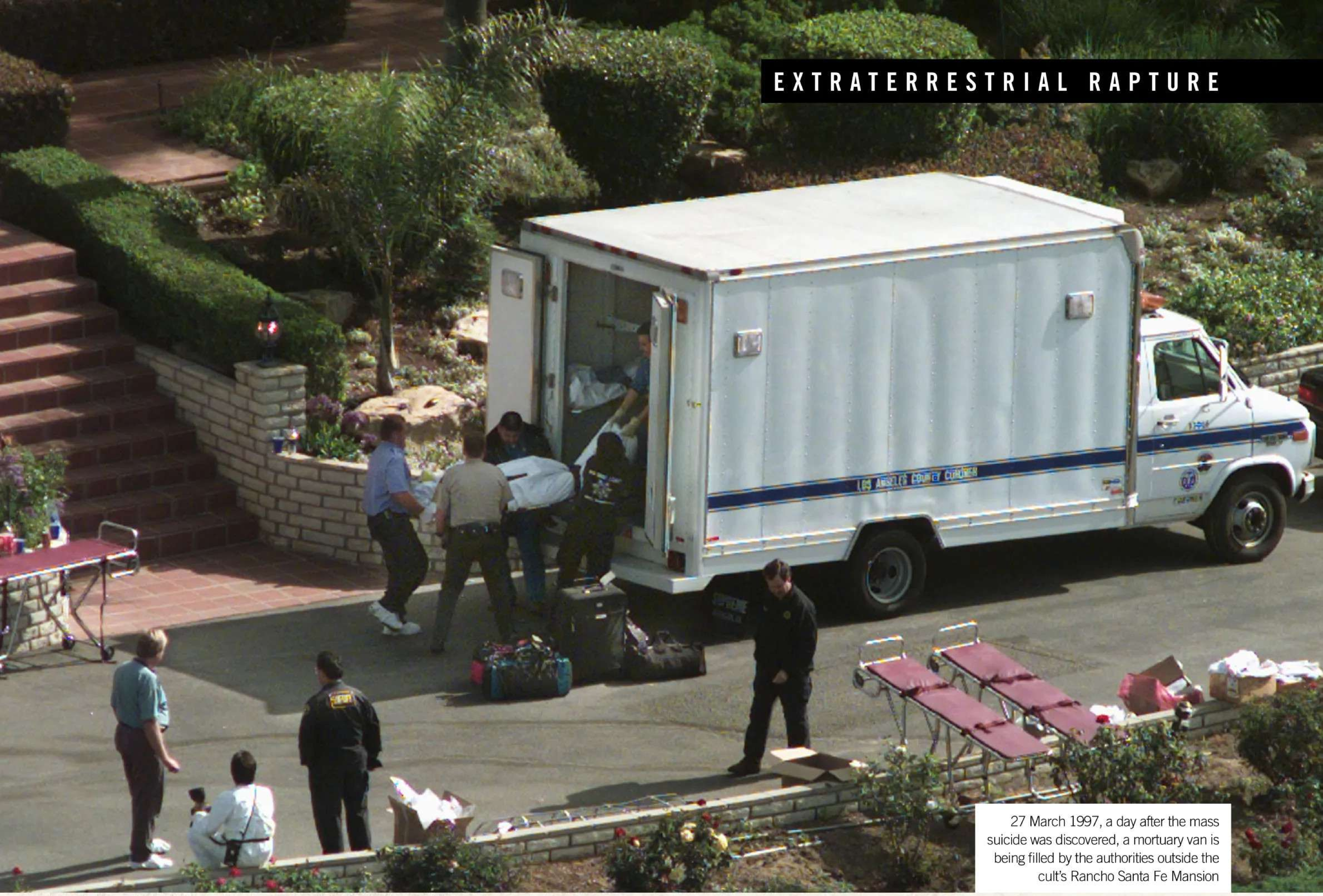
In the wake of the New Age zeitgeist and the rise of movements such as Scientology and Jehovah's Witnesses, Applewhite and Nettles toured Western states as "The Two", spreading the idea that extraterrestrials had long ago seeded planet Earth with humans and that they would return to collect the chosen few. Their followers came from many walks of life, but most felt disaffected and that they didn't fit into society. Survivor Michael Conyers, who was a member of the cult from 1975 until 1988, said that when Ti and Do, "presented the picture of being able to literally leave in a craft, which they were saying was similar to what Jesus did – he left in a physical body – when they overlaid that with modern technological information… it all lined up for me."

MAD BONNIE

THE "TI" TO APPLEWHITE'S "DO", BONNIE NETTLES KEY TO THIS CELESTIAL CULT



You could argue that if Bonnie Lu Nettles hadn't succumbed to cancer and had lived into the late 1990s, then 38 people (plus Marshall Applewhite) would never have lost their lives and Heaven's Gate might have remained an innocuous UFO cult and a footnote in Californian history. Born into a Texas Baptist family in 1927, Bonnie's beliefs grew out of her parents', eventually abandoning orthodox religion to follow the occult, astrology and the paranormal. She was the mystic of their group, interpreting signs and communicating with the ethereal beings that they believed would eventually return to Earth and claim the worthy few. Like every ardent member of their group, Bonnie had become estranged from her family, including her four children. Her daughter, Terrie Nettles, had no idea her mother was dying of cancer, and Applewhite didn't even let Terrie know about Bonnie's death until weeks after she had passed. Instead, he made explaining Bonnie's death to his dwindling number of followers his priority. "Ti experienced no symptoms prior to the week she left her vehicle, and for the most part, her vehicle slept through the transition. We're not exactly sure how many days it might have taken her to return to the Next Level."



27 March 1997, a day after the mass suicide was discovered, a mortuary van is being filled by the authorities outside the cult's Rancho Santa Fe Mansion

END OF DAYS

The fledgling cult's membership was already on the wane when crisis hit in 1985: after several years living with terminal cancer, Bonnie Nettles died. A personal tragedy for Applewhite, neither was this meant to happen according to prophecy - Nettles was supposed to be taken bodily to the next level. It forced Applewhite into a period of deep reflection in which he reinterpreted their own creed in order to hold on to what remained of his followers. "It put not just Do to the test but all of us to the test," said Heaven's Gate survivor Chuck Humphrey. "Do we think this is real or do we think this is just a con game?"

After introducing suicide as an option for his followers, that they could leave their terrestrial 'vehicles' behind and ascend as ethereal beings to the afterlife, Applewhite cracked down on them. Food was rationed and contact with the outside world was limited. They were 'out of the spacecraft' whenever they left the cult's home and therefore liable to being left behind if their extraterrestrial messiahs chose that time to return to Earth, an unimaginable fate. Celibacy was enforced, and Applewhite convinced six of his most devout male followers to travel to Mexico City with him to be surgically castrated. Ostensibly this was to maintain focus on their mission, although anyone on the outside looking in could have seen that Applewhite was ridding himself of his true sexuality under the auspices of their faith.

By October 1996 the cult had renamed themselves Heaven's Gate and earned enough money from donations and its members' work to rent a mansion in Rancho Santa Fe. Known to the group as "The Monastery", this 850-square-metre plot cost them $7,000 a month (paid in cash). The group also invested in alien abduction insurance that would cover as many as 50 people and compensate them to the tune of $1 million each should UFOs kidnap them.

As Hale-Bopp approached its perihelion (closest point to the Sun) in March 1997, cult members Fed Ex'd messages to old members and friends and Applewhite made a final VHS video recording in which he outlined what the group was about to do in the name of eternal salvation.

"Our mission here, at this time, is about to come to a close in the next few days. We came from distant space and indeed what some might call, another dimension. And we're about to return… You can follow us but you cannot stay here and follow us. You would have to follow quickly."

That's exactly what Chuck Humphrey tried to do not long after he made the call to inform the Sheriff's Office of the mass suicide at the mansion.

"I was so happy to hear that they were finally off this planet, that they finally got out of those vehicles, and I just wished that I was with them at that moment."

Chuck attempted suicide six weeks later, but the police managed to get to him in time. Unfortunately, it would not be the last time he would try to take his own life. In February 1998 the body of Chuck Humphrey was found in the Arizona desert. A plastic bag had been sealed tight around his head. Connected to it were pipes that ran to the exhaust of a nearby car. Beside his body lay a note for his daughter, and in his pocket was a $5 bill and three quarters.

© Getty Images / Alamy

JONESTOWN DEATH CULT

IN 1978, 900 PEOPLE IN GUYANA DRANK THE POISONED KOOL-AID ON COMMAND FROM REVEREND JIM JONES. WHAT MADE THEM FOLLOW HIM TO THEIR DOOM?

WORDS **NEIL MITCHELL**

On 18 November 1978, in a remote part of Northern Guyana 150 miles to the west of the country's capital, Georgetown, over 900 U.S. citizens died in what was, until 9/11, the largest single loss of American life in one deliberate act. But this was no act of war or terrorism. The tragic, senseless deaths of the men, women and 276 children who had followed their spiritual leader, the Reverend James Warren 'Jim' Jones into the Guyanese jungle in search of a better life, was deemed to be an act of "revolutionary suicide" by the charismatic but paranoid preacher.

Drinking a mixture of Flavor-Aid/Kool-Aid, sedatives and cyanide, Jones' devout followers took their own lives in a mass suicide as their dreams of building a communal utopia free from the outside interference of a modern society they had rejected crumbled around them. This mass suicide was, however, also a mass murder, with gun-toting guards and Jones' ultra-loyal inner circle administering by force when necessary lethal injections to those unwilling or unable to kill themselves. The events of that fateful day at the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project, renamed 'Jonestown' by the reverend himself, scored a deep wound into the American psyche, reiterated the dangers of the cult of personality in the most horrific way possible and subsequently left an indelible, sinister, mark on pop culture. Why did Reverend Jones choose the path of self-destruction, and what was it about him that led the Peoples Temple members to follow his instructions on that fateful day? What, also, was it about those members and their lives that drew them to Jones and to so readily give themselves in mind and sometimes in body to their anointed leader? It would be far too easy to dismiss Jones as just a mad preacher and the Peoples Temple members as mindless sheep. In reality, collective decisions, personal situations, sociopolitical fluctuations and many other factors leading up to events such as Jonestown and other mass cult deaths are complex, played out over years and only pieced together with the benefit of hindsight.

The catalyst for what became known as the Jonestown Massacre was the arrival at the Peoples Temple compound the previous day of a delegation fronted by Congressman Leo J. Ryan on an investigative trip. The entourage included a number of reporters and representatives of a group called Concerned Relatives, formed by Temple defectors and worried

BELOW A few days after the massacre, officials and press descended on Jonestown. What awaited them was nothing short of horrific: hundreds of corpses, face-down in the dirt, most of which were beginning to bloat and fester in the hot equatorial climate

family members of those living in Jonestown. At the behest of Concerned Relatives, Ryan led this pre-arranged fact-finding mission to establish whether or not the concerning stories of mental and physical abuse, financial corruption and enforced imprisonment relayed to the American politician held any substance. What Ryan initially found seemed to show that Jonestown was a successful, inspirational attempt at integrated communal living, with a colourful choir-led welcoming party thrown in the visitors' honour.

The cracks in the façade were quick to appear though, as a note passed to Ryan and his entourage by Peoples Temple members Vernon Gosney and Monica Bagby called for their help in leaving Jonestown. Ryan confronted Jones with the clearly agitated reverend assuring his guest that people were free to leave at any time. With the mood in Jonestown now palpably changed, Ryan and two of the visiting delegates spent a fitful night among the nearly thousand strong Peoples Temple members.

DEATH OF A DREAM

On the morning of the 18 November, 11 Peoples Temple members left Jonestown on foot and caught a train to the neighbouring small town of Matthew's Ridge, such was the danger they correctly sensed mounting at Jonestown. By the afternoon, a number of other members had approached Ryan and said they wanted to depart, with one of them, Jerry Parks, calling the commune "nothing but a Communist prison camp". While Jones may have granted them permission to leave, the Peoples Temple leader was, via an act of brutal violence, about to instigate events that would end in the needless self-destruction of Jonestown.

Having avoided injury during an attack by a knife-wielding commune resident Don 'Ujara' Sly, Congressman Ryan travelled to Port Kaituma airstrip as the delegation and the defecting members, including Vernon Gosney, Monica Bagby and Temple stalwart Larry Layton, prepared to leave Guyana on two chartered planes. The reverend sent nine members of his trusted Red Brigade security squad to the airstrip after them. After the fiercely loyal Layton shot and injured Gosney and Bagby, Jones' gun-toting henchmen unleashed a hail of bullets on the delegation. Five people, including Congressman Ryan, were murdered, with the first moments of the attack captured on camera by NBC cameraman Bob Brown, who became one of the others to die at the hands of Jones' ruthless hit squad.

Back in Jonestown, the reverend gathered the Peoples Temple members in the commune's main pavilion and launched into a 44-minute End of Days speech encouraging his followers to commit "revolutionary suicide" to protest at the perceived external threat to the church highlighted by the visiting delegation. The preacher lied to his assembled followers, saying that the attack on Ryan and the delegation was not his bidding but would, regardless, result in the end of Jonestown and the forced separation of parents from their children. Under an atmosphere of paranoia, confusion and mass-hysteria, pre-prepared vats of poisoned grape-flavoured drink began to be passed around the Peoples Temple members. As Jones' followers started to imbibe the fatal concoction the Messianic preacher continued his warped monologue, the chilling entirety of which makes up the infamous 'Jonestown Death Tape'. Decrying the outside forces that would not let the Jonestown residents live in peace, Jones commanded those around him to 'die with a degree of dignity, lay down your life with dignity; don't lay down with tears and agony'. Hundreds would soon do precisely that.

> "Please. For God's sake, let's get on with it. We've lived – we've lived as no other people lived and loved. We've had as much of this world as you're gonna get. Let's just be done with it. Let's be done with the agony of it"

RIGHT Fortunately, there was lots in the way of documented life in the form of photos, audio tapes and writing left behind at Jonestown. This photo shows Jim and his wife and was found in a pink folder on the site

RIGHT BELOW The 'Rainbow Family' at the compound in 1976, a year before the Peoples Temple was moved to Guyana. Jim Jones can be seen sitting next to his wife Marceline Jones (left), her sister (right), her three children (front) and some of their adopted children (back)

The handful of eye witnesses who, for a variety of reasons, survived or escaped the apocalyptic meltdown of Jonestown would later attest to the fact that armed guards surrounded the pavilion, blocking the exits and trapping the members inside. Those who suddenly grew alarmed at what was unfolding were forcibly held down and injected with the poisonous liquid and, most horrifically of all, syringes were emptied directly into the mouths of the babies that formed part of the commune's population. This terrible act of self-annihilation by members who appeared to be in a 'trance' and the outright murder of the remainder was not an unplanned reaction to the perceived attack on the Peoples Temple and it's way of life, however. Jones had subjected those living in Jonestown to regular rehearsals to prepare them in case a day like the one at hand ever occurred. These weekly dry runs, called 'White Nights', allowed Jones to test the resolve and willingness of the Peoples Temple members to lay down their lives not just for their beliefs but also for the leader many of whom blindly worshipped as if he were a God. Jones, though, looked as mortal as the rest of his followers when his body was found amid the hundreds of others at Jonestown with a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. A scene of horror on a Biblical scale, The Jonestown Massacre sent shockwaves around the world, with pictures and articles adorning the covers of newspapers and magazines everywhere. The media, the American Government and the general public all tried to make some sort of sense of the events of 18 November 1978.

THE MAKING OF JIM JONES

When the full details of The Jonestown Massacre were revealed and the stories of defectors, survivors and escapees were recounted, life in the Peoples Temple under the

DON'T DRINK THE KOOL-AID

DEATH CAME IN MINUTES FROM A LETHAL MIX OF SOFT DRINK AND POISON, ADMINISTERED FROM A RUSTY BUCKET

1. INGESTION

The grape-flavoured Kool-Aid/Flavor-Aid would have tasted slightly bitter due to the mixture of poisons and sedatives it contained but would have still tasted relatively sweet.

2. SEDATION

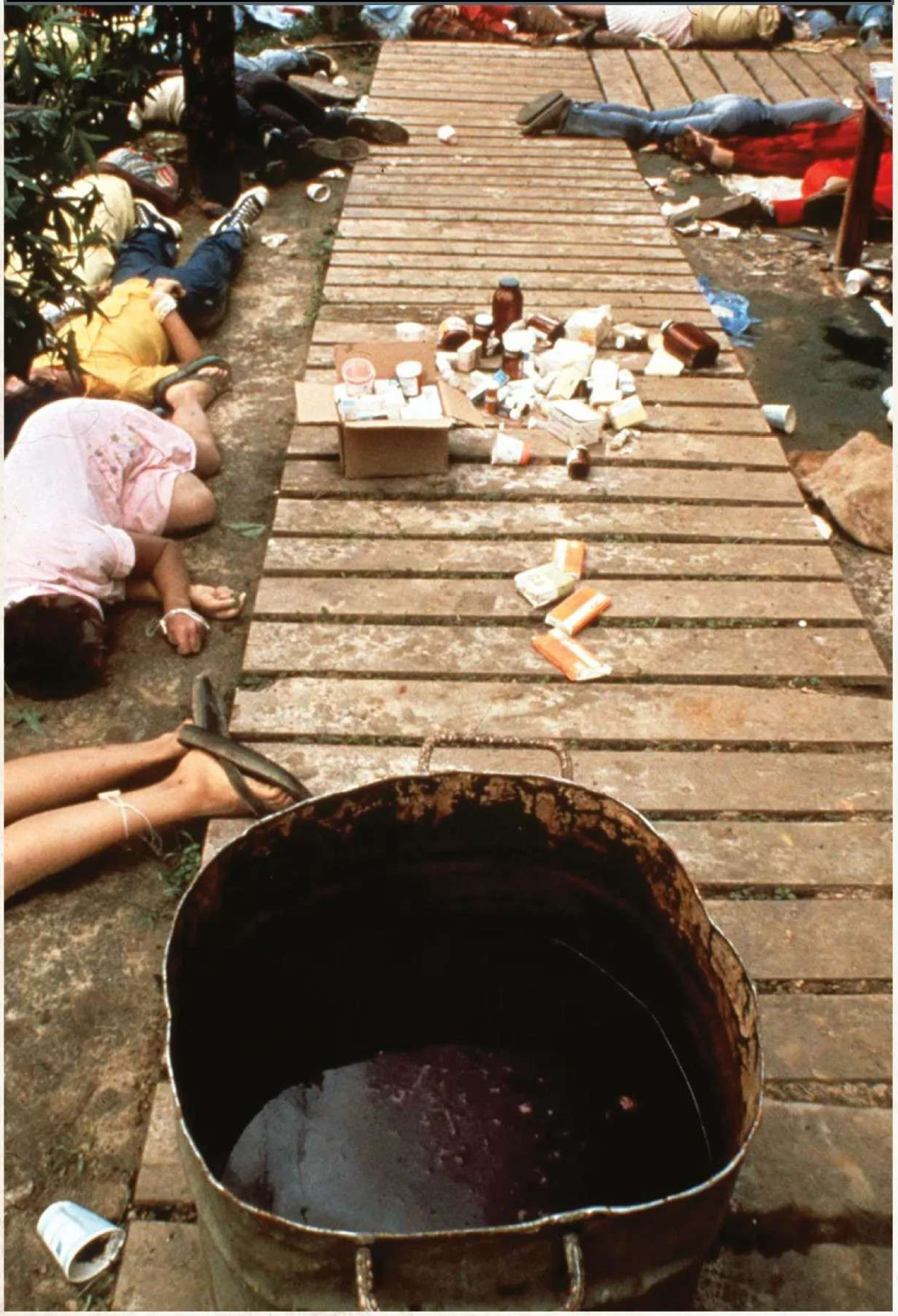
The inclusion in the drink of sedatives – Valium, chloral hydrate and Phenergan – would have quickly had a calming effect on the mind and a relaxing effect on the body.

3. UNCONSCIOUSNESS

The highly potent combination of sedatives would have rendered the Peoples Temple members unconscious within a matter of minutes.

4. DEATH

The liquid's lethal ingredient, cyanide, would have brought about death within five minutes of it being drunk. When ingested, this highly toxic substance affects cellular respiration, often leading to pulmonary edema before resulting in a fatal cardiac arrest.



> “So my opinion is that you be kind to children and be kind to seniors and take the potion like they used to take in ancient Greece and step over quietly because we are not committing suicide; it's a revolutionary act. We can't go back; they won't leave us alone. They're now going back to tell more lies, which means more congressmen. And there's no way, no way we can survive”

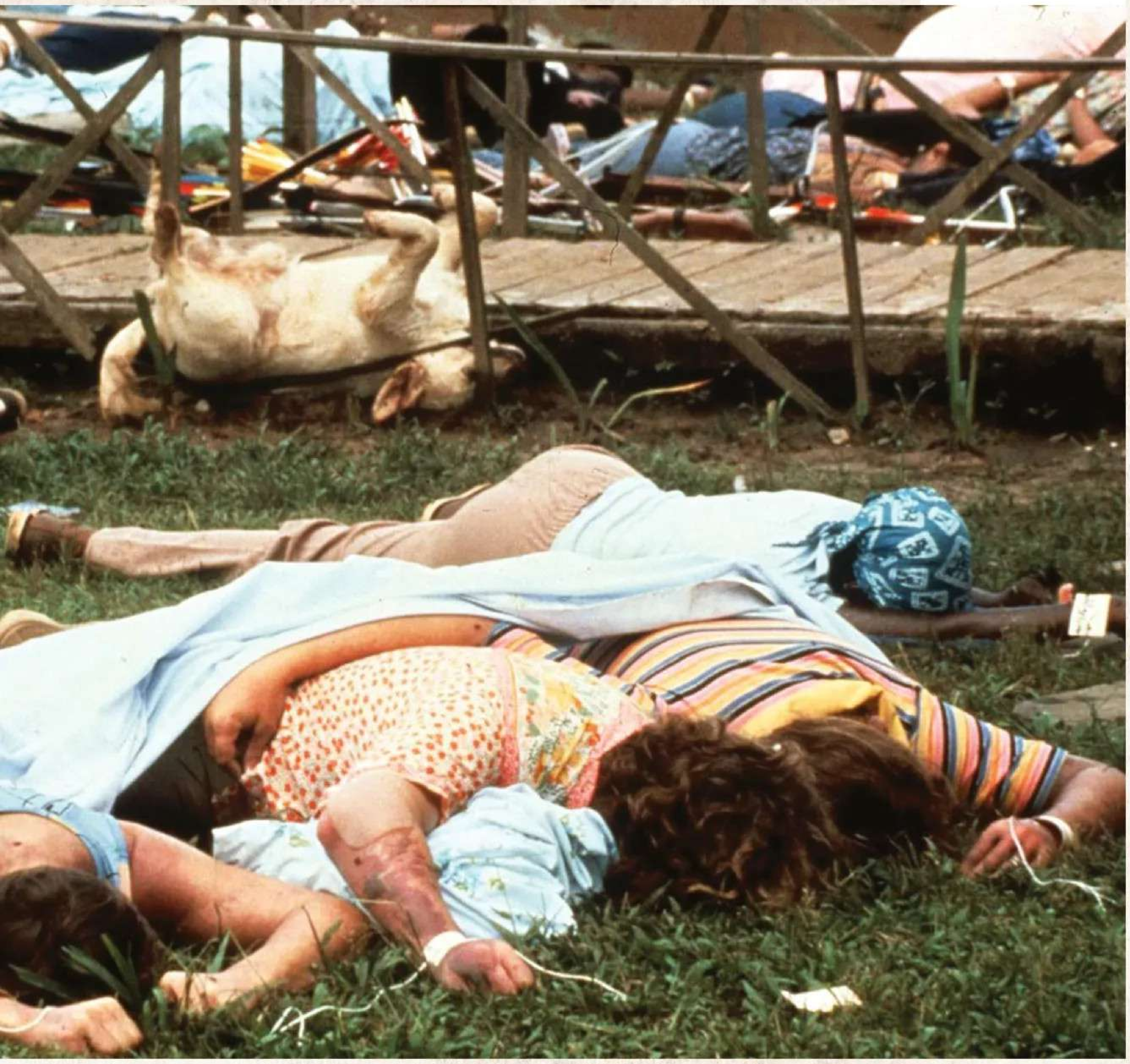
INSET A helicopter surveys the scene just days after, taking a snapshot of just a part of the full scene of the massacre leadership of Reverend Jim Jones showed the preacher turned cult leader to be a paradoxical figure in the extreme. Charismatic, an exceptional public speaker, idealistic and highly intelligent, Jones was a saviour, paternal figure, friend and mentor to some and an abusive, dictatorial, unstable huckster to others.

Born into poverty on 13 May 1931 in Crete, Indiana, to James Thurman Jones, a disabled alcoholic veteran of WWI, and Lynette Putnam Jones, who worked several jobs to keep the family afloat, Jim Jones was, by his own admittance, 'from the wrong side of the tracks'. Virtually ignored by his father and not much more than a mouth to feed to his overburdened mother, Jones was also not much liked even by the few other kids he could reasonably call his friends. The young lad's obsession with religion and death, which manifested itself in funerals for dead animals presided over by the zealous Jones, cast him as an oddball in the small-town community. The persistent rumour that Jones cold-bloodedly killed a cat adding to the picture of a troubled and potentially dangerous child. A regular visitor to Pentecostal churches from an early age, Jones' psychological make-up and immediate environment were already marking him out as someone 'different' to the majority of those around him.

The young Jones studied the lives and teachings of Marx, Zedong, Gandhi, Hitler and Stalin, intently analysing their respective strengths and weaknesses. The combination of a dysfunctional family life, obsession with religion, morbid fascination with death and deep interest in historical figures who cultivated a cult of personality for various ends were to sow the seeds for the direction Jones' life would ultimately take. When his parents split, Jones and his mother moved to Richmond, Virginia, and while working as an orderly at a hospital, Jones met and later married nursing student Marceline Baldwin. Having graduated from the University of Indiana, Jones initially drifted along until, at the age of 21, he entered the ministry as a student pastor at the Somerset Methodist Church in Indianapolis. Within a year of preaching in the predominantly poor, white area, Jones had established a notable statewide reputation as a healer and evangelist. Though Jones' mesmeric brand of Pentecostal hucksterism drew admiration, the church and the local white congregation did not back Jones' desire to hold racially integrated services.

An idealistic and outspoken young man with a hatred of segregationist policies and racism, Jones quit the church and founded his own, Wings of Deliverance, in 1955. This period in Jones' life also saw him regularly attending meetings of the Communist Party USA, clearly marking him out as a man with strong views that ran counter to the prevailing social and political conventions of 1950s America. A socialist integrationist who along with his wife adopted children of different ethnicities to create a genuine 'rainbow family' that included the first African-American child adopted by a white couple in Indiana, Jones was progressive, even radical, and appealed to those who felt alienated by mainstream society.

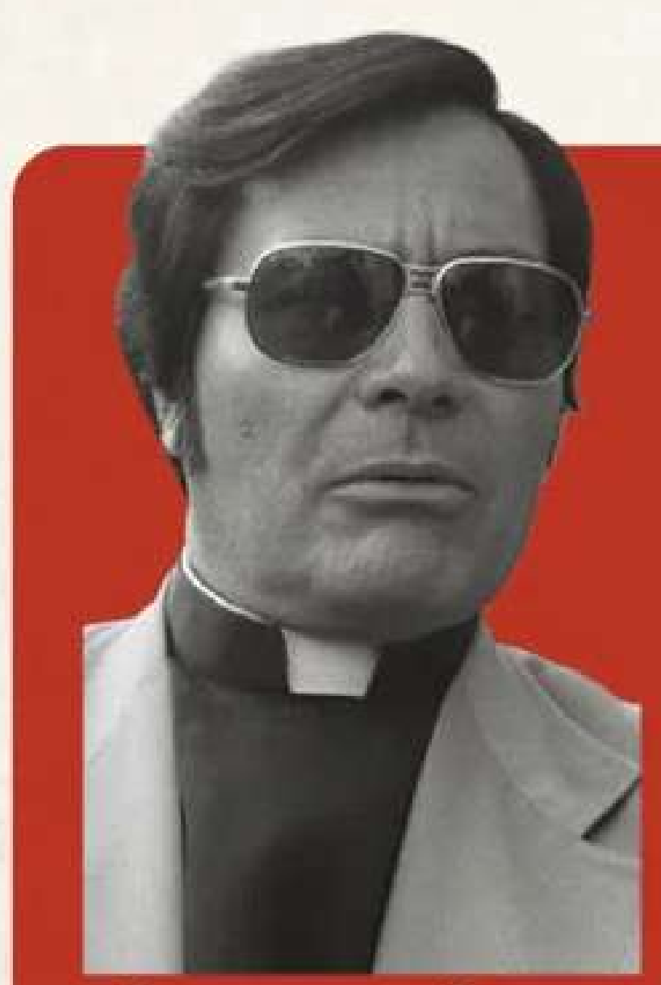
With his church now rebranded as the Peoples Temple, the reverend bought time on local AM radio to deliver his sermons and the church's racially mixed congregation steadily grew until, in the mid-sixties, he relocated the Peoples Temple to Redwood Valley in California. The reason for the move was startling and extreme: Jones told his Indiana congregation that the world would be destroyed by nuclear war on 15 July 1967 and that Redwood Valley was, supposedly, one of



FAR LEFT In late 1977, Jim Jones was being pursued for criminal wrongdoing and fled to Guyana. Mayor George Moscone (seen here shaking hands with Jones) refused to investigate the Peoples Temple. He was assassinated in an unrelated incident just days after the 1978 massacre

LEFT A media-savvy Jones showing the prime minister of Grenada around the site in June 1977

BELOW Most of the Peoples Temple drank the Kool-Aid (literally and proverbially). For those who got cold feet on the day, Jones' elite were on standby to administer a lethal injection. Jones himself took a bullet to the head



> “Death is not a fearful thing… a man's gotta make at least one bet a day, else he could be walking around lucky and never know it. People are tired around here, but I'm not sure they're ready to lie down and fall asleep”

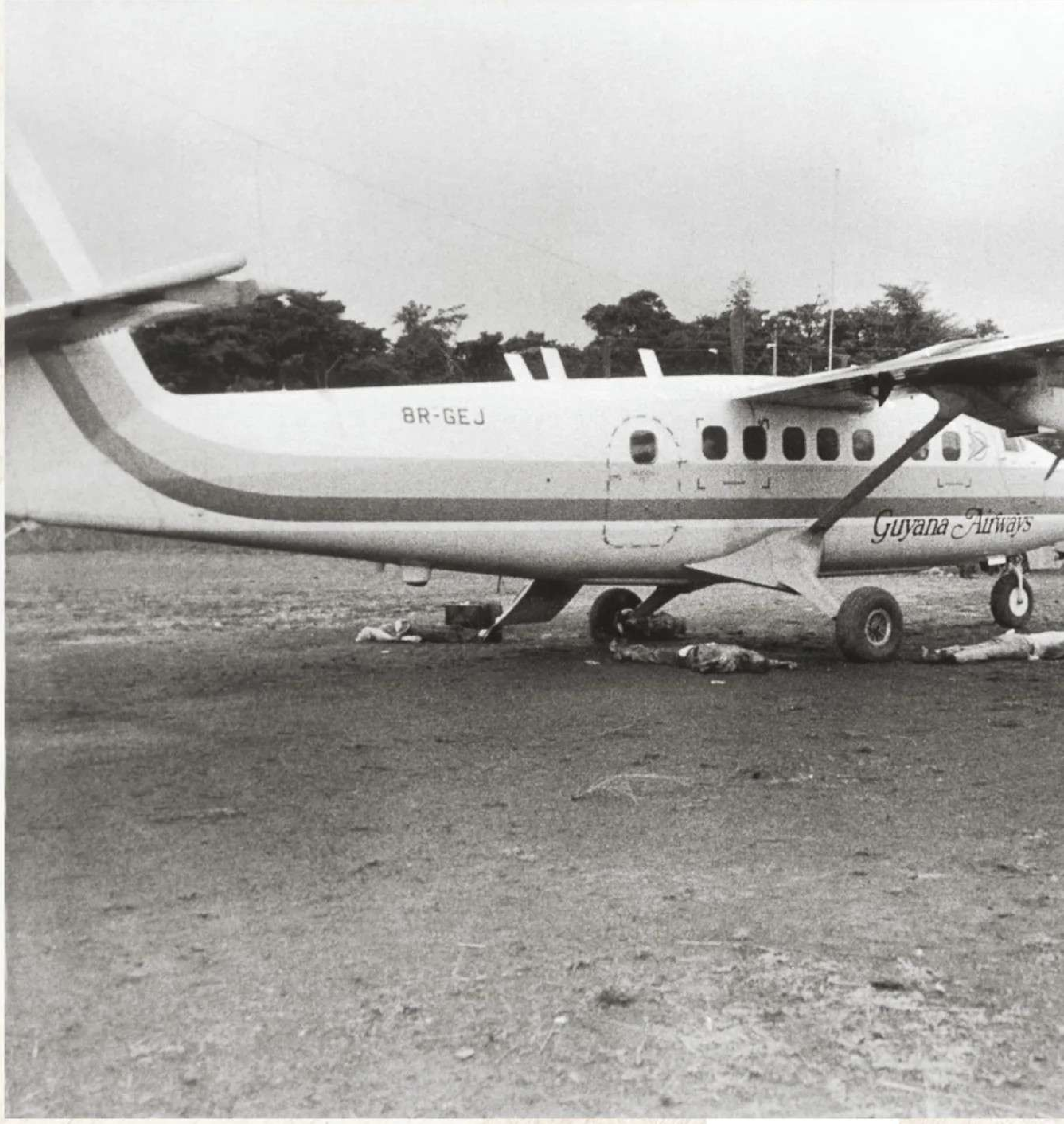
only nine places in the world secluded enough to escape the ravages of World War III. Over a hundred Peoples Temple members followed Jones and his family to California, assured that the preacher's apocalyptic prophecy would come true. That it didn't did nothing to halt the church's burgeoning congregation or Jones' own reputation as a visionary leader.

Although a large proportion of Jones' followers were ethnically diverse, they weren't all underprivileged, or 'from the wrong side of the tracks' as Jones himself once was. Stable, middle-class families upped sticks and followed Jones along with those from poorer backgrounds and/or ethnic minorities, first to Redwood Valley, then to San Francisco, a major centre of radical protest movements in the 1970s. Now openly espousing a form of apostolic socialism and deriding the Christianity with which he began preaching, Jones' power and influence grew in tandem with the growth of new Peoples Temple members. Those looking for an alternative to mainstream social views, conventional religions and an ever more media-dominated society at the time were naturally drawn to the commanding, intelligent and outwardly welcoming figure of Jones.

POLITICS AND MEDIA

Unusually for a 'cult' leader, Jones wasn't merely commanding the attentions of his congregation; his powerful brand of political sermonising saw him befriended, admired and championed by a number of highly influential people. Having rallied enough support among his congregation and other San Franciscans to help George Moscone win the city's mayoral election in 1975, the newly elected Mayor appointed Jones as chairman of the San Francisco Housing Authority Commission. Private meetings with the First Lady, Rosalynne Carter, and vice-presidential candidate Walter Mondale followed as Jones' charismatic personality and strident views penetrated the very heart of American political life. It wasn't all smooth sailing for Jones or the Peoples Temple, however, as a number of ex-church members directed serious accusations of emotional, physical and sexual abuse at the seemingly untouchable, whiter-than-white Reverend Jones. Rumours of adulterous behaviour and amphetamine abuse cast a shadow over one of the time's most newsworthy figures in American society. From the outside, someone claiming to

> “Take our life from us. We laid it down. We got tired. We didn’t commit suicide. We committed an act of revolutionary suicide protesting the conditions of an inhumane world”



ABOVE Jones’ elite Temple members paid a visit to the airstrip, where they gunned down three members of the press, a Temple member and congressman Leo Ryan, 53

ABOVE RIGHT As the airstrip shooting was taking place, a fanatically loyal Larry Layton fired on defectors who had boarded a Cessna plane. He was arrested and was the only Temple member to face criminal charges for his part in the massacre

be the reincarnated spirits of Jesus, Gandhi, Father Divine, Buddha and Lenin while preaching a strict Communist doctrine to followers utterly in thrall to their words would be cause for concern enough, and with such serious allegations added to the list it’s not surprising that media scrutiny of the Peoples Temple and it’s leader grew in intensity.

With an article detailing the allegations due to be published by *New West* magazine in the summer of 1977, Jones and the majority of the Peoples Temple members fled the States for the compound in the Guyanese jungle that Jones had begun building several years earlier. The move from San Francisco to Jonestown, ostensibly to create a socialist ‘paradise’ but also to help Jones escape media intrusion, would signal the beginning of the end for the reverend’s political influence as almost all of those who had courted him previously now backed away. With his drug addiction now an open secret among the Peoples Temple members, Jones became a brooding, paranoid and megalomaniacal figure ruling over his followers in ever more dictatorial fashion. With his live or recorded voice relayed through a loudspeaker system 24 hours a day, Jones offered his followers no respite from his intense, highly politicised preaching. Even so, Jonestown was still, at its peak, populated by a thousand of the reverend’s loyal followers.

Isolated from the outside world and presided over by an increasingly paranoid leader, were the Peoples Temple members so afraid for their lives that they just went along with life in Jonestown? Was Jones’ ever more extreme proselytising actually taken as the ‘Word of God’ that resulted in the eventual mass suicide/murder of the commune’s residents? It’s clear that Jones was an expert manipulator of people and situations. The reverend successfully negotiated with the Guyanese authorities to help the mass migration of the Peoples Temple members but to hinder anyone then wishing to leave. Similarly, the unexplained delays in the granting of visas for media organisations wishing to visit highlighted just how Machiavellian the preacher really was behind closed doors.

THE CULT OF PERSONALITY

With many members now calling Jones ‘Father’ or ‘Dad’, the reverend began to talk of ‘translation’, his dream and belief that they would die together, be transported to another planet and live in a Utopia. As fantastical as that is to read in the clear light of day, the reverend’s outlandish prophesies didn’t concern the poorest members of the Peoples Temple enough to stop them from willingly signing over around $65,000 (£52,000) in welfare cheques to Jones every month. Espousing a basic, non-consumerist lifestyle open to all, Jones, through the Peoples Temple accounts, had an estimated $26 million (£22 million) at his disposal and never gave African-Americans any positions of real power within the church. Hypocritical and delusional he may have been but, bar the odd dissenter, the Peoples Temple members kept the reverend on his pedestal. By the time of Congressman Ryan’s ill-fated trip into the Guyanese jungle, Jones was lauding the virtues of Stalin and Robert Mugabe, figures widely despised across the world for their cruelty. Whatever the shared dreams and ideals were of those who followed Jones, it’s clear that over the years a damaging cycle of enablement allowed Jones to dominate his followers to the point that it seemed logical to take their own lives.

A hustler with an unchecked God complex, a healer whose ‘miracles’ were proven fakes, an evangelist who fell foul of the vices he decried and a loving saviour who subjected dissenters to spells in a ‘torture hole’ in Jonestown: the Reverend Jim Jones was a man of many unsettling faces. His legacy? The phrase ‘Don’t drink the Kool-Aid’, common parlance for not believing everything you read and hear. Jones was yet another warning to society that unwavering devotion to one person or one cause is both unhealthy and potentially very dangerous.

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

THE ARRIVAL OF VISITORS TO JONESTOWN FINALLY SENDS THE REVEREND JIM JONES OVER THE EDGE

Congressman Leo J. Ryan's arrival in Jonestown on a fact-finding mission offered Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple members the chance to show the world that all was harmonious in their isolated socialist utopia. To whoops and deafening applause, Ryan stated that "there are some people here who believe this is the best thing that has ever happened to them in their lives", but all was not well. Paranoid, fatigued and increasingly unstable, Jones saw the visitors as intrusive and untrustworthy, a view compounded when a number of members suddenly expressed their desire to leave.

Whether genuinely believing his people were 'under attack' or fearing for his own reputation, Jones responded to Ryan's concerned questions by saying that "people play games, man, they lie". Corrupted by power, Jones felt betrayed by those who left and so initiated the final, horrific chapter in the story of the Peoples Temple.

Leo Ryan was attacked with a knife shortly before he attempted to leave Jonestown and then shot dead

© Corbis; Getty Images; REX Features; Nancy Wong, Alamy

RED ALERT IN WASCO COUNTY

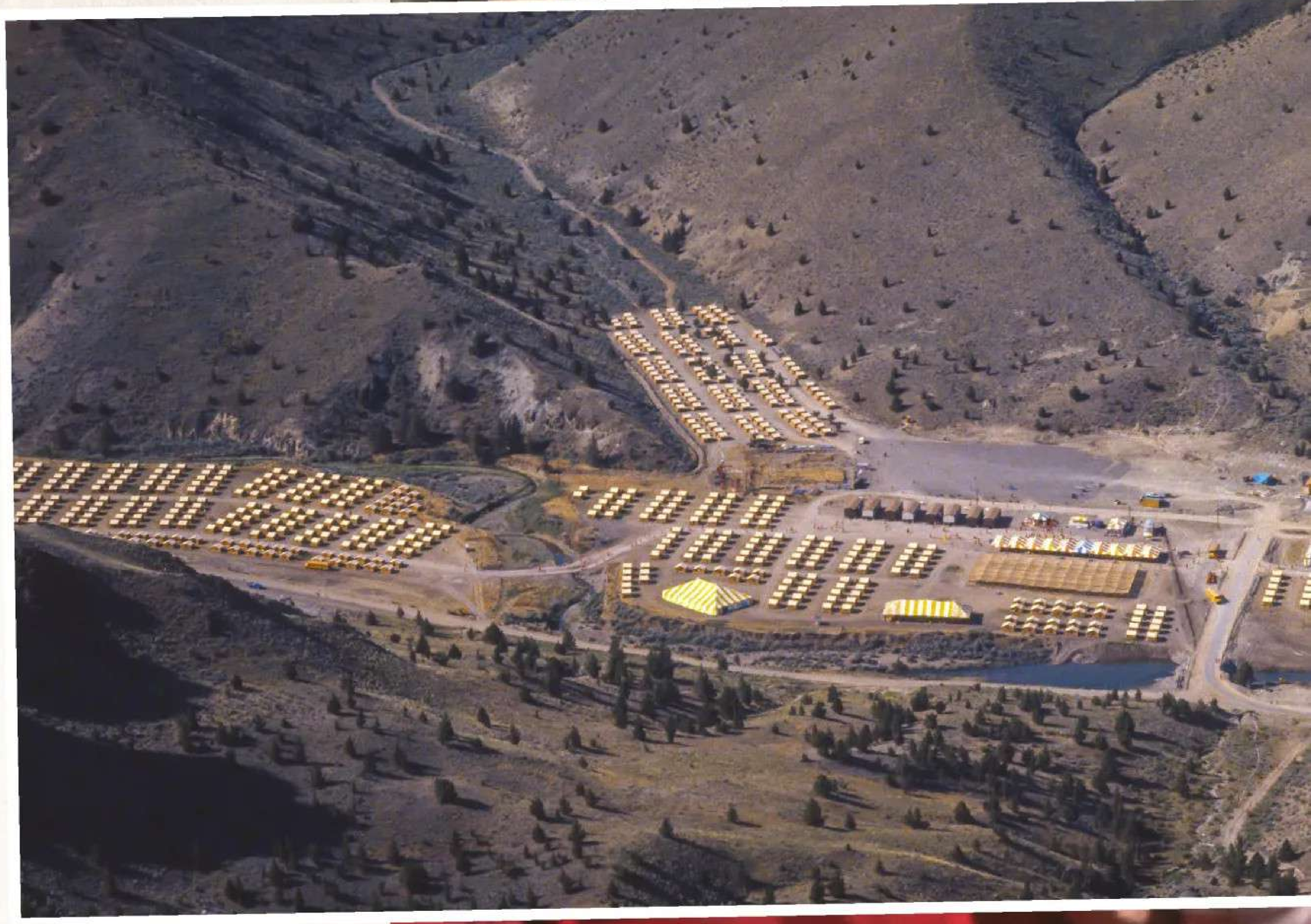
TERROR IN A RELIGIOUS UTOPIA: THE RISE AND FALL OF RAJNEESHPURAM

WORDS **CHRISTOPHER EVANS**

Something strange was going on in Oregon in the summer of 1984. Hundreds of homeless people, plucked from doorways and benches all across the U.S., were being shipped by bus to an old ranch in remote Wasco County. They had been promised food, shelter and an opportunity for a fresh start at a farming commune dedicated to enlightenment. To the outside world, this was an act of charitable kindness by a religious community practising what they preached. The residents of Oregon, however, suspected ulterior motives. They held their breath, awaiting the next act in a broiling war, one that would result in the largest act of bioterrorism ever unleashed on U.S. soil.

Born in India in 1931, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh took his first steps into the world of work as a philosophy teacher at the University of Jabalpur in central India. A lengthy career in academia beckoned. And then, at just 21, Rajneesh experienced a spiritual awakening. Retaining his teaching post (he was eventually asked to resign by the university after making a series of controversial speeches in 1966), he started travelling throughout India extolling the virtues of his own movement, Rajneeshism, the key tenets of which entailed meditation, the rejection of mainstream religions and sexual liberation. By 1974, Rajneesh had formed an ashram in Pune, and come the end of the decade he was reportedly attracting 30,000 wealthy Western visitors a year, all of them flocking to India in search of their own spiritual awakening.

RIGHT Devoted followers watch their adored guru as he enjoys his daily "drive by" in one of his 93 Rolls Royces



BELOW At its height, the city of Rajneeshpuram was home to around 7,000 people

NO LEFT

CITY OF RAJNEESH
WELCOME TO YOU

LEFT Despite assuring officials they were building a farming commune, the Rajneeshees constructed their own city

RIGHT Rajneeshees were known for wearing shades of red, orange and pink, as favoured by their guru

FAR RIGHT Members of the group protest against the policies of the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service), 1982

BELOW As tensions with the locals heightened the cult armed itself with Uzi machine guns

BELOW RIGHT The Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, the religious guru who founded Rajneeshism

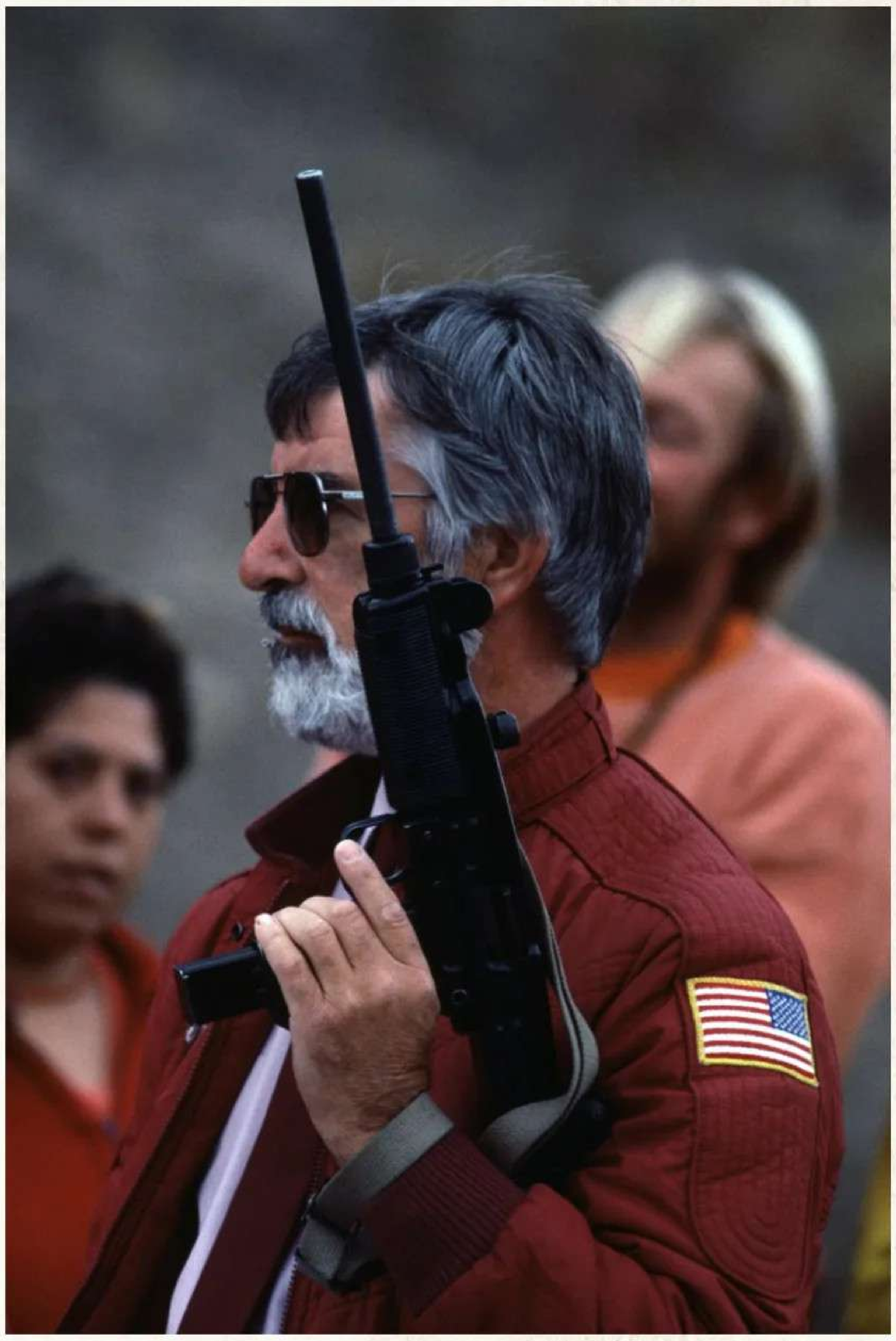
They called themselves the Rajneeshees and devoted themselves – and their cash – to Bhagwan (a named he started using in 1971). Francis Ruddy, married to Albert S. Ruddy, the producer of *The Godfather*, became an ardent follower, as did actor Terrence Stamp and many Bollywood stars. Such famous faces helped the cult to build up enormous wealth.

Inside the Rajneeshees' religious retreat followers would study the guru's philosophy of self-exploration with "dynamic meditation", which involved breathing exercises and releasing emotions in the form of shouting, singing, dancing and laughing. Disturbing footage of these rituals showed people writhing naked in a padded room, shrieking, panting and lashing out at one another.

The Bhagwan also preached sexual freedom, earning him the nickname "the sex guru". He encouraged "free love" among his disciples, approving of promiscuous behaviour and group sex as a way of bringing to the surface repressed emotions and desires. This was reportedly to stop members bonding with each other and becoming couples, potentially leaving the cult. Women who did not take part in this "sexual freedom" were labelled frigid and selfish.

It wasn't long before the Rajneeshees caught the eye of the Indian Government. Investigations were launched into the cult, which was accused of smuggling drugs and gold, tax evasion and money laundering. The guru found himself slapped with a $5-million (£4-million) tax bill and promptly fled India before the government could really crack down.

Entrusted with the task of finding them a new home was the Bhagwan's right-hand woman, Ma Anand Sheela. Born into a well-to-do family in India, Sheela attended college in New Jersey and was eventually appointed the personal secretary



STOP modern crucifixion
LIVE LOVE LAUGH
HIS MESSAGE IS LOVE
AMERICA ACCEPT BHAGWAN
yes BHAGWAN yes

to the Bhagwan. When he took a vow of silence Sheela took over, becoming the voice of the movement and overseeing the day-to-day running of the commune.

In 1981, Sheela took a trip to Oregon, U.S., and purchased Big Muddy Ranch, a 64,000-acre abandoned cattle farm, for nearly $6 million (£5 million). She charmed local farmers and politicians by hosting a party and buying cattle, even though the Rajneeshees themselves were vegetarian.

The ranch was renamed Rajneeshpuram and Sheela quickly set to work getting the commune ready for the Bhagwan's arrival. While she had assured local officials that they were just a small farming community, it became apparent that they had very different plans in store.

Thousands of Rajneeshees descended on the county, settling in Antelope, a small town just miles away from the ranch. The local population was just under 60 people and the influx of the commune's members meant they were easily outnumbered. The local government was taken over and the town's name changed to Rajneesh.

Meanwhile, at the ranch, Bhagwan's followers worked tirelessly to build his and Sheela's vision of utopia. The once empty land became a sprawling city of 7,000 people, complete with its own police and fire departments, restaurants, shopping malls, and even an airstrip, onto which the Bhagwan arrived in his private jet.

Although the cult's members were ordered to hand over their own personal wealth, the Bhagwan promoted materialism, owning 93 Rolls-Royce cars, in which he would be driven up and down the road of the commune. His adoring followers would line up to watch his daily "drive-by".

The local residents watched on, initially bemused by the Rajneeshees in their red and orange clothing, the Bhagwan's preferred dress code. But as the commune grew and the group asserted itself, the attitude towards it became hostile. Some locals sold up and fled. Those who stayed lobbied their government to take action, while others sported bumper stickers on their cars that said "Better Dead than Red" and used photos of the Bhagwan for shooting practice.

Local officials attempted to block further developments in the commune, citing broken zoning laws that prevented the land from being used in this way. Local environmentalists called for the 'city' to be torn down. The Attorney General sued the commune for violating the First Amendment of separation of church and state. The Rajneeshees retaliated by claiming any attempt to stop their plans was religious discrimination. They labelled the locals bigots and rednecks, turning up in droves to the planning director's offices to spread intimidation and chaos.

Sheela became a formidable presence, well known for her cutting insults and sarcastic quips in both legal meetings and

> “SOME LOCALS SOLD UP AND FLED. OTHERS USED PHOTOS OF THE BHAGWAN FOR SHOOTING PRACTICE”

media interviews. When concerns were raised in a school board meeting about Rajneeshee teachers, Sheela accused a board member of driving her dead husband to suicide by sleeping around. During a segment on the television programme *60 Minutes* she responded to local fears surrounding the Bhagwan's followers by quipping, "What can I say? Tough titties."

Many of the group's members, who were white middle-class Americans, found themselves experiencing bigotry for the first time. "It's like you've always been a member of the majority group, and suddenly your skin has changed colour," one of them said.

In 1983 a hotel in Portland run by the cult called Hotel Rajneesh was bombed. The commune stepped up its security in the wake of the attack, setting up checkpoints to search visitors and arming its members with Uzis. Security details would accompany the Bhagwan during his daily Rolls-Royce rides around the city. This sudden display of bared teeth heightened the unease felt in the local community and among the government. The memory of the Jonestown massacre was still fresh in America's mind.

The civil war continued until it reached boiling point in 1984. Sheela and the other Rajneeshee leaders decided that the only way to beat the commune's legal troubles and clear the path for the Bhagwan's vision was to get themselves into government and take over the entire county. The Rajneeshees only made up ten per cent of the county's electorate, so they quickly hatched a plan to win the upcoming elections.

Over the summer they launched the "Share-a-Home" charity, which saw them scouring the States offering homeless people work on the commune in exchange for hot meals and somewhere to sleep. There was one catch though: they would be required to lend their vote to the Rajneeshee candidates in the elections that November.

As the buses of homeless people began to roll in, officials realised what was going on. The Secretary of State called an emergency rule, stopping voter registrations in Wasco County and requiring all new voters to appear in person to prove their eligibility.

Many of the 2,000 homeless who had been brought to the ranch suffered severe mental health problems. Fights would often break out and, fearful of their image of a peaceful religious commune being tarnished, the commune's leaders put sedatives in their beer to keep them calm. Now deemed useless, they were eventually kicked out, driven to local towns and dumped on the streets.

Their plan ruined, Sheela and her associates had to devise another way to power. If they couldn't rig the vote, then they had to ensure the rest of the county wouldn't be able to vote at all. To achieve this they would poison the water, so on election day the locals would be too sick to head to the polls.

As a practice run for their devious scheme, Rajneeshees were given vials of brown liquid and ordered to sprinkle it onto the salad bars of restaurants in town. Inside the vial was Salmonella, cultivated at the ranch in an on-site laboratory. The result was an outbreak of sickness, with over 750 cases documented and 40 people hospitalised.

Fingers were immediately pointed at the Rajneeshees, but there was no proof at the time that they were responsible. The group reportedly decided against going ahead with the plan when the Center for Disease Control and Prevention became involved.

After losing the elections and with potential legal trouble on the horizon, Sheela became desperate. She set her sights on murder, ordering members of the cult to carry out a number of failed assassinations of the group's assorted enemies. One such attempt was carried out against Jim Comini, a county commissioner. While recovering in

ABOVE Rajneeshees, take part in dynamic meditation to unleash buried emotions

TOP RIGHT The commune had its own dedicated police force

RIGHT It also had its own airport, Air Rajneesh, which allowed the guru private access

AIR RAJNEESH
N555JA

hospital after an operation, a Rajneeshee snuck into his room intending to inject a lethal poison into his IV drip. The plan was thwarted when she realised he was not actually on an IV and fled.

Meanwhile, back on the ranch things were falling apart. A power struggle had erupted between the Bhagwan and Sheela. Convinced the guru's physician was keeping him on drugs to wrestle control of the commune, Sheela wiretapped her boss' home and had the doctor poisoned, though he survived.

Finally, in 1985, the utopia in rural Oregon collapsed. Sheela and other high-ranking leaders of the commune vanished into the night. The Bhagwan made a return to the public eye to accuse Sheela of the Salmonella poisoning attack the year before, as well as the attempted murder of his doctor and the planned assassination of government officials.

The FBI swooped in. They tracked Sheela down in Germany, extraditing her back to the United States. Investigations revealed the truth behind the cult's role in the bioterror attack, and she was sentenced to 59 years in prison for attempted murder and wiretapping. Sheela served a little over two years before being released, fleeing back to India. Today she runs a nursing home in Switzerland.

The Bhagwan also attempted to flee. His Learjet took off from Rajneeshpuram city and headed to India, but he was caught and arrested during a refuelling in North Carolina. He was charged with immigration fraud and ordered to leave the United States. On his return to India he reinvented himself as Osho, running meditation centres until his death in 1990.

Back in Wasco County, the local community breathed a sigh of relief. Abandoned by their leader, the followers left the city of Rajneeshpuram behind, empty and desolate.

In 1991 the ranch was purchased by a billionaire developer and today enjoys a new life as a summer camp for a Christian youth group.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE
LTNOMAH COUNTY ORE.
ORRECTIONS DIVISION
6-9-2-3-0-2-0-7-86

After fleeing to Germany, Sheela was eventually caught and extradited back to the U.S.

Sheela, pictured here in 2021, was recently the subject of a new Netflix documentary called *Searching for Sheela*

BINGING THE WILD WILD COUNTRY

REVISITING THE CULT IN A NETFLIX DOCUMENTARY THAT REINTRODUCED THE RAJNEESHEES TO A NEW GENERATION

In 2018 Netflix dropped a six-part documentary series that delved into the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, Ma Anand Sheela and Rajneeshpuram. Exploring the cult's story, from its beginnings in India up to its collapse and fallout, the docuseries features footage from inside the cult and interviews with many of the characters involved. Former members share their recollections of living on the commune, while Antelope residents and officials remember what it was like on the other side of the battle.

While it gives a balanced look at the events in Wasco County, it has been criticised by both sides for skipping over certain aspects, such as the "worker bees" who helped build a city in the middle of nowhere and the finances that allowed the guru to fly in on his own jet.

The undisputed star of the show, though, is Ma Anand Sheela herself. Archive footage shows Sheela at her acid-tongued worst, and she appears in new interview footage to give her thoughts, almost 30 years after the group imploded.

Following the show's airing, Sheela admitted to watching only small parts of it, claiming it had backfired on the producers as the raw footage of the Rajneeshees only demonstrated their work and devotion to their guru.

© Alamy, Getty Images

The charred building after members committed mass suicide, in Cheiry, Switzerland, October 1994

PERISHED IN FLAMES

THE ORDER OF THE SOLAR TEMPLE WAS A DOOMSDAY CULT NO ONE HAD HEARD OF – UNTIL ITS FIERY DEMISE

WORDS **MARTYN CONTERIO**

The origins of the doomed Order of the Solar Temple, (in full: International Order of Chivalry Solar Tradition), date back to the early 1980s, when Joseph Di Mambro (1924–1994) and Luc Jouret (1947–1994) decided to join forces to form a new movement.

Jouret, a former paratrooper in the Belgian army and a trained doctor, had a keen interest in homeopathy, as well as religious history, the environment and the paranormal. Jouret, known in esoteric circles as a lecturer on mystical topics and a motivational speaker, was introduced to French-born Di Mambro, a former clockmaker turned teacher in the occult, on the circuit and they became fast friends, recognising in each other mutual interests and ambitions.

In 1984, Di Mambro left his group the Golden Way, and Jouret left Julian Origas' Renewed Order of the Temple (ORT), an organisation obsessed with the traditions of the Knights Templars, the band of holy brothers who rose during the Crusader era as warrior monks to protect pilgrims on the journey to Jerusalem. The Templars were suppressed by the Catholic Church at the start of the 14th century at the behest of Philip IV of France, with many brethren burned at the stake on trumped-up charges of heresy.

Once Jouret and De Mambro consolidated their positions, they targeted wealthy individuals for membership in order to grow the cult (originally known as ORT-Solar Tradition). Most people signed up generally came from the professional classes and moneyed elites (in France, as well as French-speaking parts of Switzerland and Canada). Jouret was the charismatic frontman, while the older Di Mambro orchestrated things from behind the scenes.

Until a series of macabre events in the latter part of 1994, the Order of the Solar Temple was completely unknown to the outside world. Even among New Age sects, it was virtually obscure (operating as a secret society was part of its allure). But during the 1980s and into the 1990s, the authorities in Canada began to look into the cult and its activities. Accusations were levelled at them related to money laundering and illegal firearms sales. By 1994, the wheels were coming off.

RIGHT Emmanuelle, daughter of Joseph Di Mambro

The Order of the Solar Temple was ostensibly an apocalypse cult with a hodgepodge mythology culled from shamanism, reincarnation beliefs, 17th-century Rosicrucianism, Catholicism, astrology, Survivalism and New Age fads. Jouret preached Christianity was the last religion and therefore the end of Christianity was the end of the world. This disaster stage of humanity would require selected worshippers to complete a new spiritual journey to the New Earth among the stars. The order also took part in a mix of meditative sessions and elaborate ceremonies in which Jouret showed off his mesmerising spiritual powers (he faked these using magician's tricks and holograms). They would also recite New Age icon Alice Bailey's Great Invocation prayer, dated to 1945, which begins, "From the point of Light within the Mind of God, let light stream forth into the minds of men. Let Light descend on Earth."

Jouret was obsessed with spiritual renewal by fire and with the Winter Solstice. He began to develop a Messiah complex and stated that the group must shed their earthly bodies in order to transfer to a new spiritual life on a star orbiting Sirius (the brightest star in the night sky). The purification by flames specifically evoked the fates of the Knights Templars.

Jouret also indoctrinated his flock with the belief they would spearhead the next generation of exceptional children. Di Mambro paired off members and identified them as

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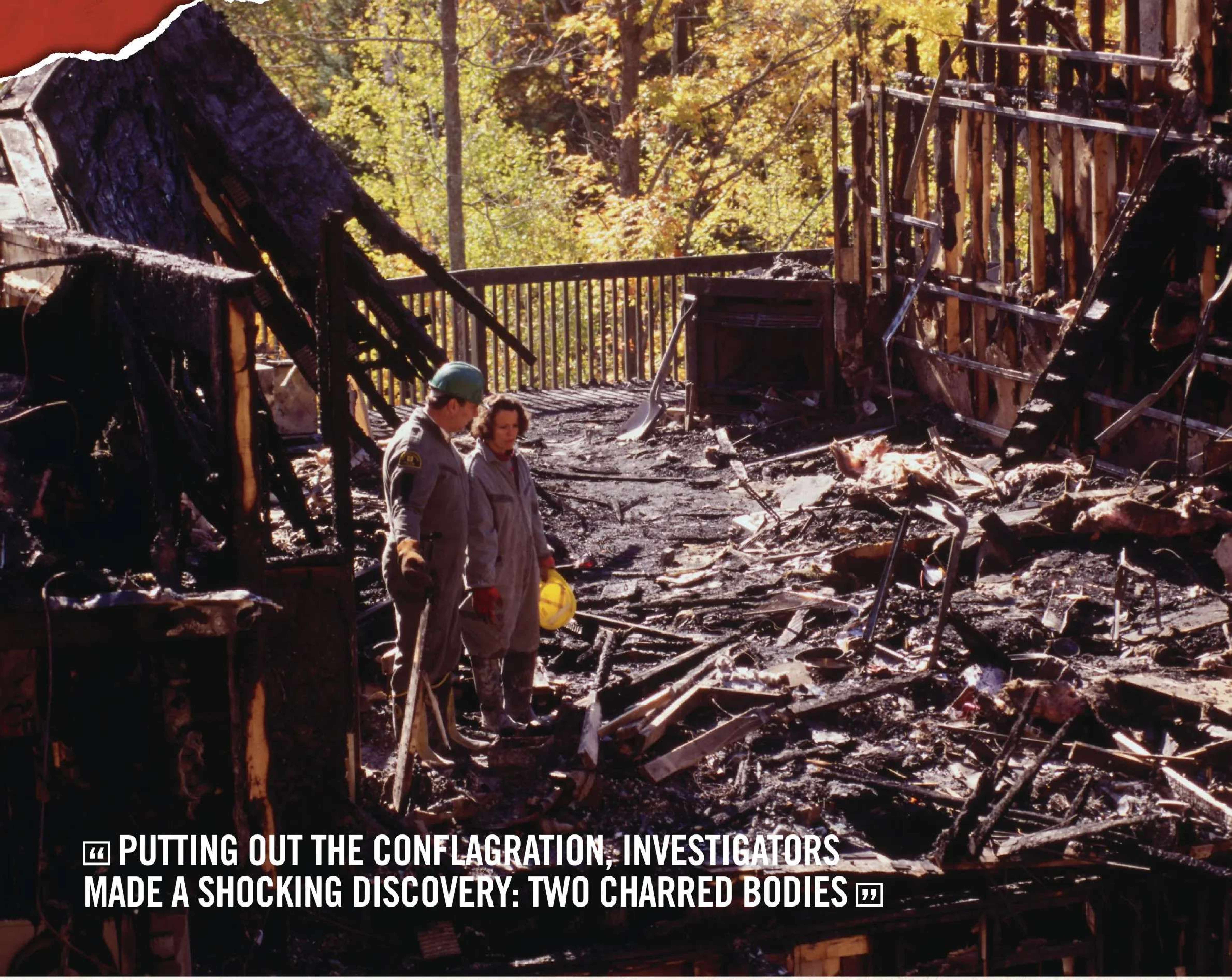
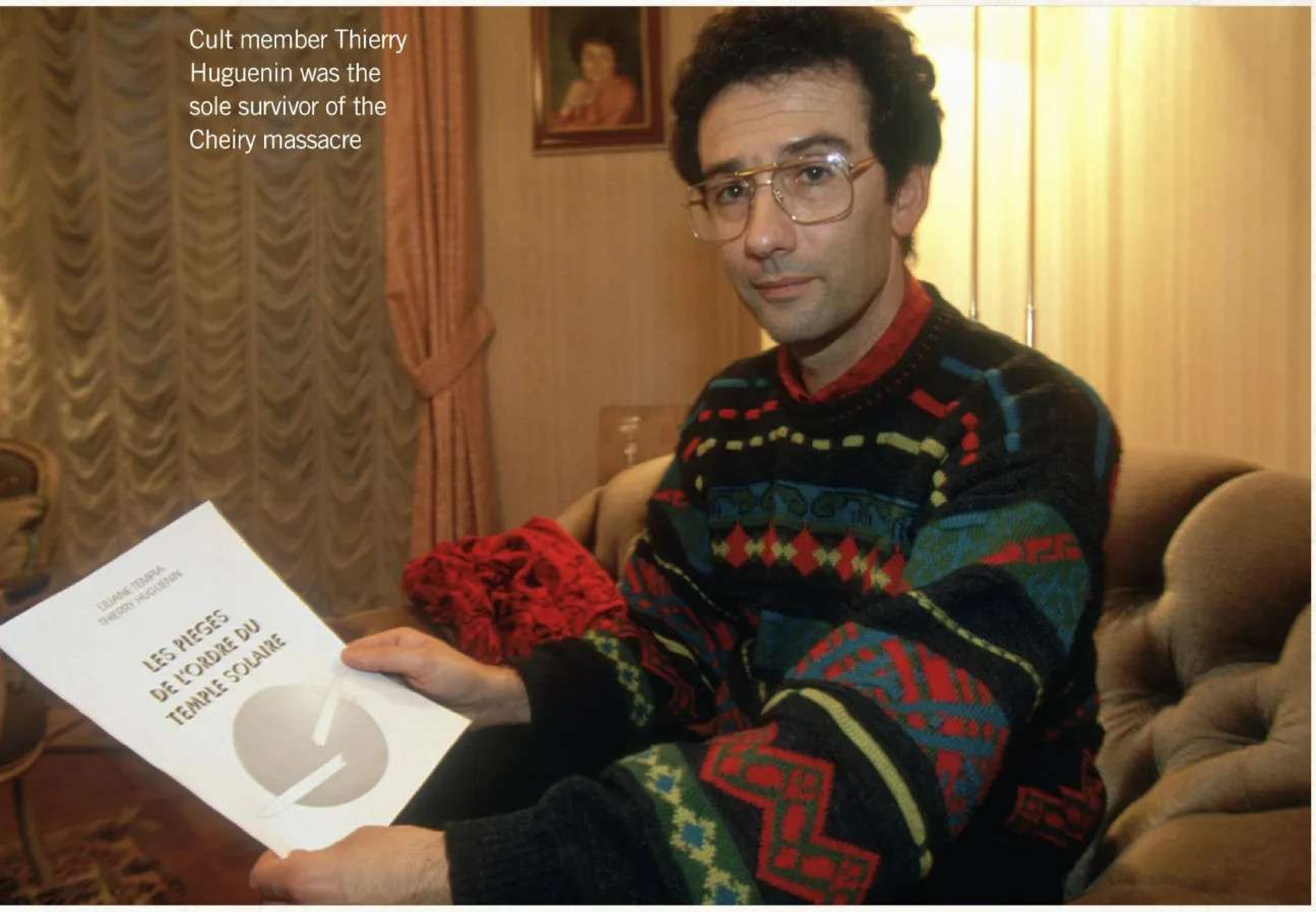
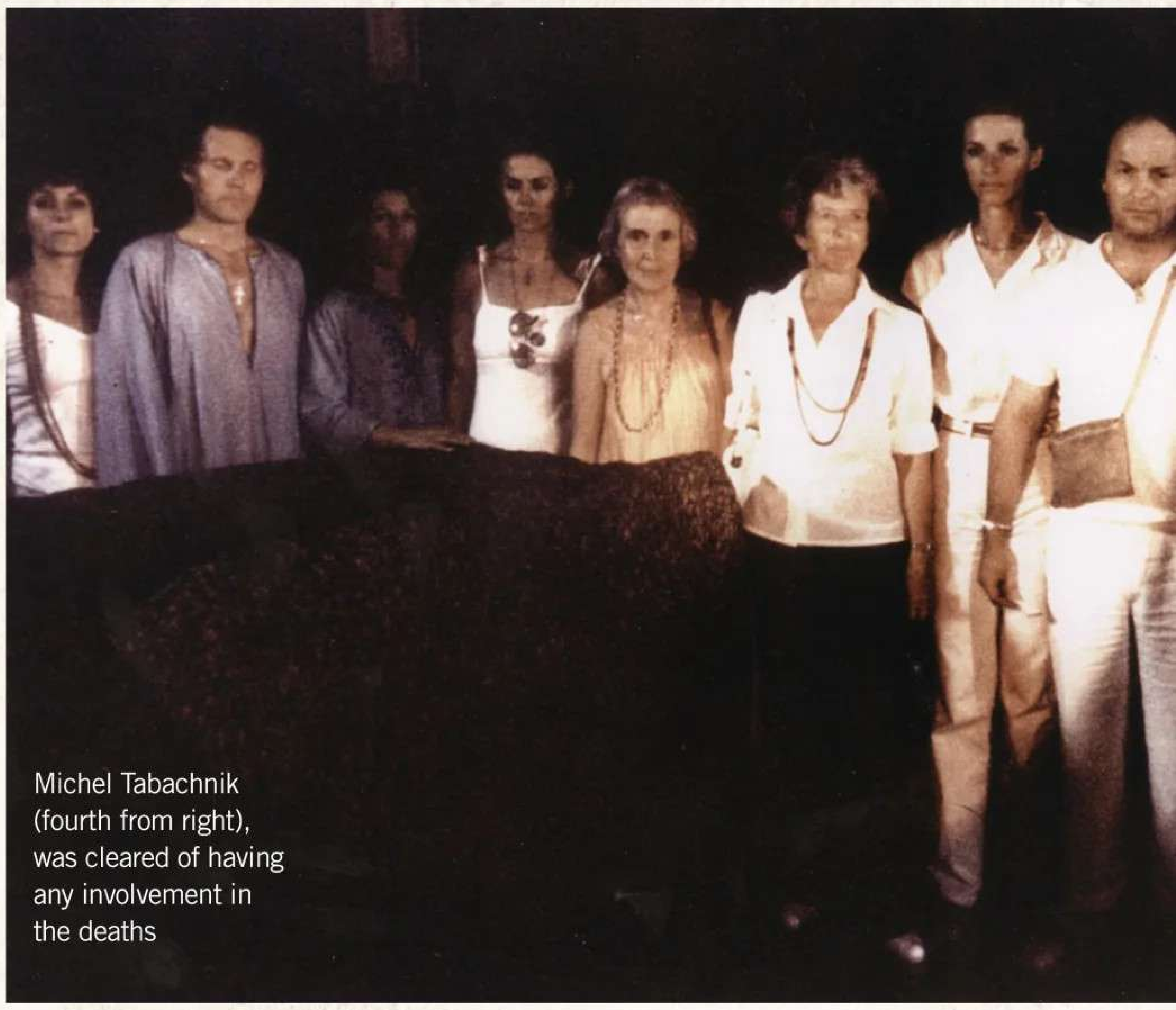


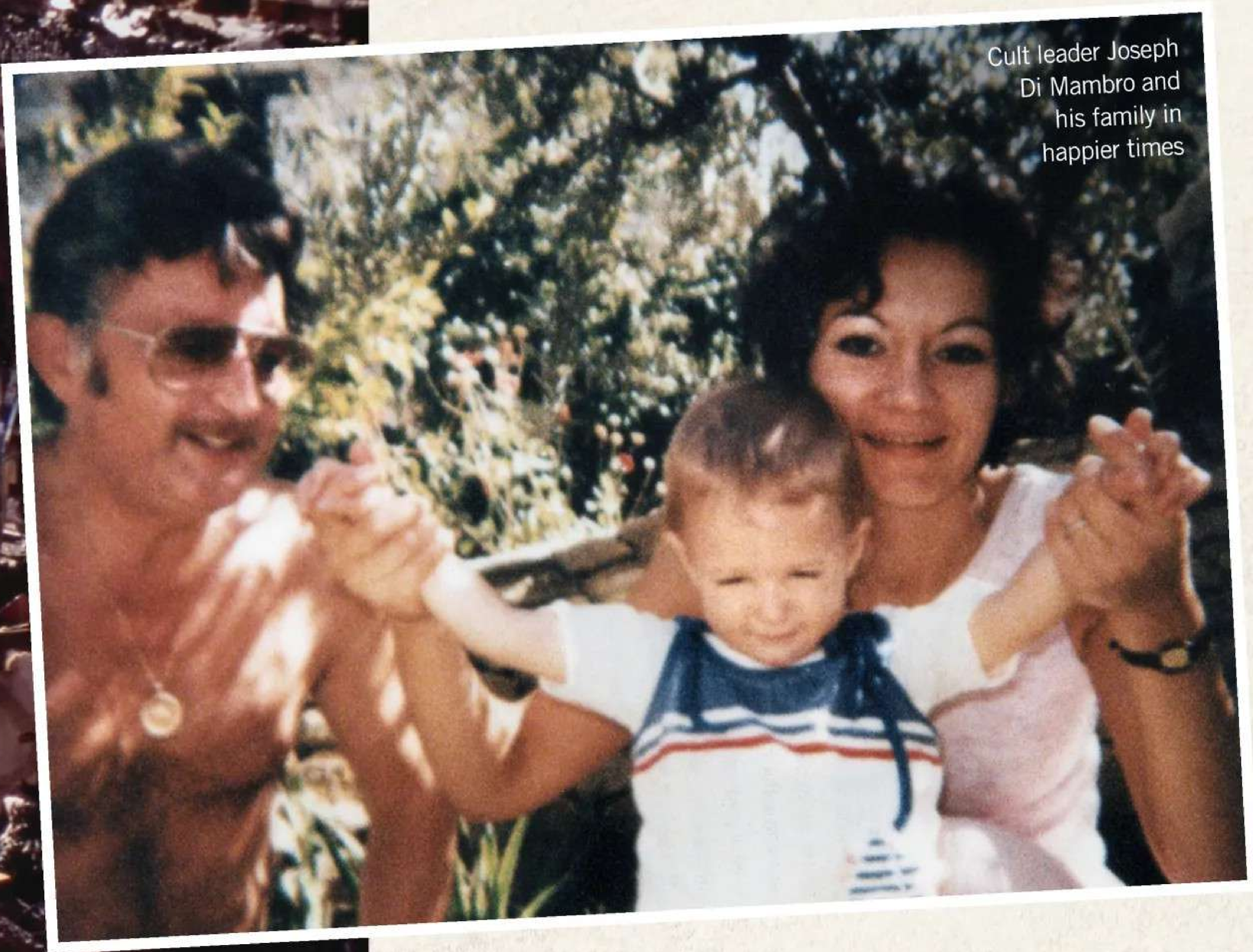
“ PUTTING OUT THE CONFLAGRATION, INVESTIGATORS MADE A SHOCKING DISCOVERY: TWO CHARRED BODIES ”


LES PIEGES DE L'ORDRE DU TEMPLE SOLAIRE

Cult member Thierry Huguenin was the sole survivor of the Cheiry massacre



Michel Tabachnik (fourth from right), was cleared of having any involvement in the deaths



Cult leader Joseph Di Mambro and his family in happier times

reincarnations of famous people from the past. He also had the authority to name offspring. Jouret at some point began to demand sex with female members before conducting ceremonies (he taught them they energised his spirituality and connection with higher planes).

In time, members became disaffected and left, including Di Mambro's adult son, Elie. Some demanded money they'd paid for sessions be returned. Jouret and Di Mambro, whose health was failing rapidly by the early 1990s, felt persecuted. It got worse in 1993, when Jouret was arrested in Quebec, Canada, for attempting to purchase guns (with accompanying silencers). This, along with rumours of terrorism offences against local infrastructure and plots against local dignitaries, added to the sinister patina developing around Solar Temple. These tensions and stresses mounted to intolerable weights. Di Mambro interpreted these gloomy signs and decided the members must prepare for the "departure".

On 4 October 1994, fire engines were called out to a property in Morin-Heights, north of Montreal, popular as a winter sports resort. A villa there was burning to the ground. Putting out the conflagration, investigators made a shocking discovery: two bodies charred beyond all recognition (members Gerry Genoud and wife Colette Rochat).

The home at Morin-Heights was owned by Di Mambro, and initially the police thought it was him and Jouret who had gone up in flames, the fire nothing more than a tragic accident. But further inspections revealed the blaze was started by incendiary devices, several of which had failed to go off. The smoking black ruins and parts of the villa left untouched increasingly began to look like a murder site. What came next confirmed their growing suspicion.

In the storage area of a small building next to the villa, there lay the bodies of three people: a man, a woman and a baby. The woman had sustained wounds to the throat, the breasts and back. The attack was excessive. The man had experienced blunt force trauma to the head, his throat was cut and his back bore the marks of 50 stab wounds. The baby had been stabbed in the heart six times with a wooden stake. The condition of the corpses suggested to the police the three had been murdered four days prior to the fire and they had been killed as part of a ritual sacrifice. The victims names were Tony Dutoit, Nikki Dutoit and their three-month-old son, Emmanuel. Arrest warrants were issued for 70-year-old Di Mambro and 46-year-old Jouret.

It later became known that Tony Dutoit, a Solar Temple member who was also employed by Jouret as a handyman, had been targeted for assassination because he cottoned on to the cult's fraudulent secrets. He also affronted the Solar Temple elders by naming his son Emmanuel, countermanding Di Mambro's privileges as a leader who named the offspring of members. For reasons only known to Di Mambro, he believed Emmanuel was the Antichrist reborn and the baby threatened his own daughter, Emmanuelle, who he considered to be a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, a new "Cosmic Christ", whom he claimed was conceived by immaculate conception and who the followers worshipped as such.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, 24 hours later, at two locations in Switzerland (Cheiry and Granges sur Salvan) members, including the leaders, committed murder-suicide. It is understood those reluctant to take part in the order issued by Di Mambro and Jouret were forced into death.

Local law enforcement and the fire department came out to a farmhouse ablaze at Cheiry. When the fire department could finally enter the property, they found an old man dead at the kitchen table. Eerily, he was slumped with a plastic bag taped over his head. A suicide? Looking closer, they noted an entry wound to the back of the head (unmistakably the result of gunfire). As in Morin-Heights, incendiary devices appeared to have been placed all around the property and adjacent buildings, many which had failed to go off.

In one of the buildings, police investigators noticed that what looked ostensibly like an office space held a secret panel. This led to a hidden chapel with red walls, red flooring, red furniture and a golden lectern. Champagne bottles were strewn around. Sporting red-and-gold capes were the bodies of eight people arranged in a star formation, feet to the centre. Like the farmer, some sported plastic bags over their heads. A bloody scene got bloodier when a second room was discovered and three more dead bodies were located.

At Granges sur Salvan another raging fire had left another macabre scene for others to find. More dead bodies (including teenagers and children). The bodies of cult leaders Di Mambro and Jouret were recovered here and identified by dental records. The Order of the Solar Temple had combusted in an orgy of violent death. This cult suddenly became headline news around the world, its inner workings and history brought into the light of inspection. A surviving member named Patrick Vuarnet mailed copies of the *Last Testament of the Solar Temple* to the press, in which the cult claimed they had achieved final purification by fire and had left Earth to begin a new life as spiritual beings in the cosmos.

The cult remained in the public crosshairs for several years after the immolations in the 1990s (other members committed suicide in Vecors, France, in 1995 and Saint-Casimir, Quebec, in 1997) due to the trial of Swiss conductor Michel Tabachnik, who was accused of being one of the cult's secret leaders and a close friend of Di Mambro's. He was cleared of any wrongdoing and being a member of the group in 2001 and then again at a separate trial in 2006. "It has taken 11 years of slander, humiliations and disgrace for the French courts to finally give me justice," he said upon his acquittal.

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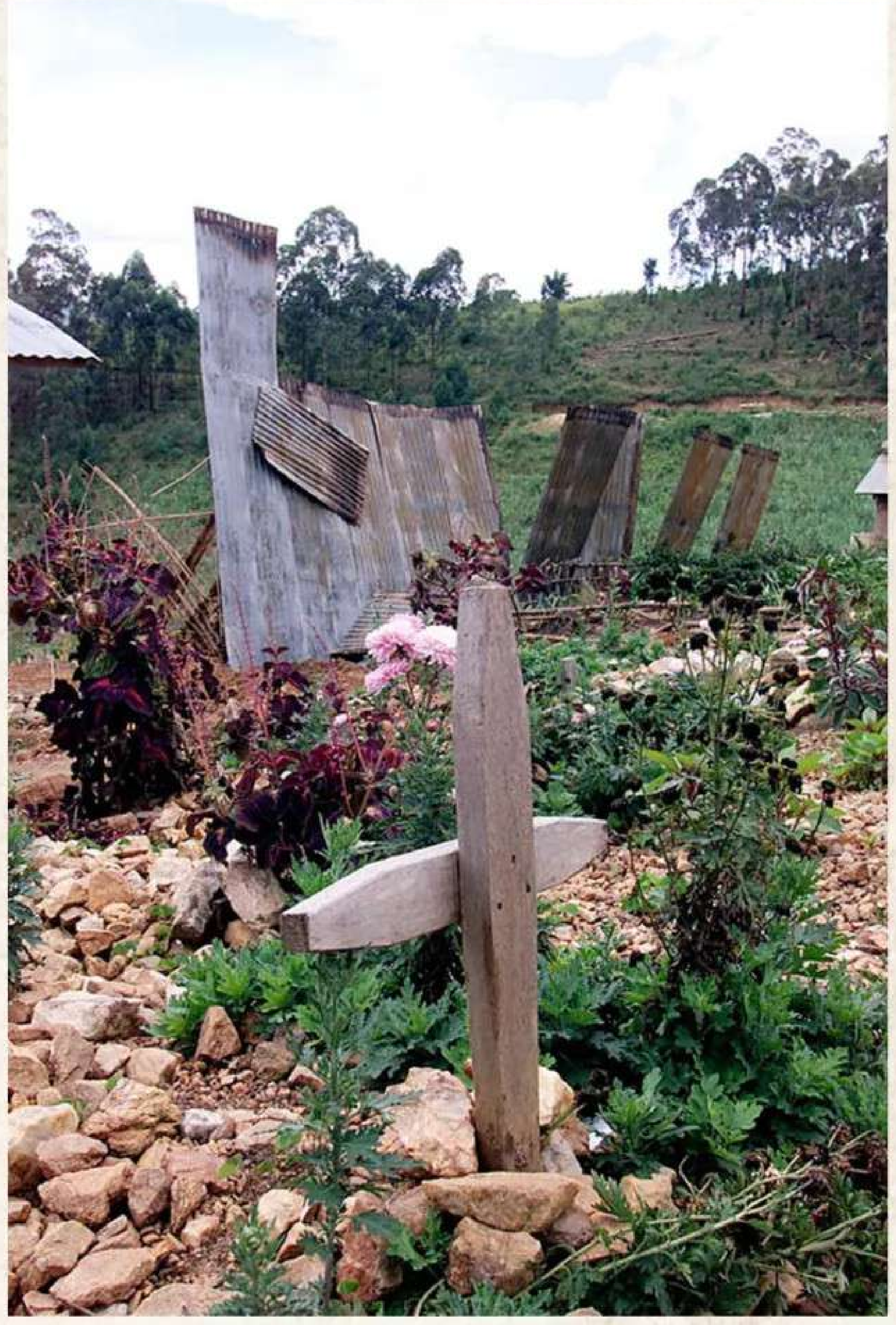
RESTORATION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

AT THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM HORRIFYING REPORTS SURFACED OF THE MASSACRE OF AN ENTIRE RELIGIOUS SECT, BUT WHAT WAS THIS MYSTERIOUS DOOMSDAY CULT?

WORDS **CALLUM MCKELVIE**

On 17 March 2000, in southwestern Uganda, a massacre took place. The victims had been trapped inside a church, the windows boarded up and the doors locked from the outside. With no means of escape, the building was then set alight. The fire quickly took hold and the hundreds of terrified victims were consumed by the inferno. According to a contemporary report in the *Guardian*, such was the heat of the flames that some of the bodies had been fused together and were impossible to untangle from one another. But this was just the beginning of the horror.

Over the coming weeks, the ensuing police investigation only served to uncover more and more dead. Some were found thrown in a latrine and others discovered at various properties in the surrounding area. The total is suspected to have been near 780, though some sources suggest 900. The victims were all members of The Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God, a doomsday cult whose leaders claimed to have had visions of the Virgin Mary. As the name of the movement suggests, its members had to strictly obey the ten commandments above all else. It was only through total compliance with these rules that they could hope to avoid the apocalypse.



ORIGINS

But just who were the masterminds that orchestrated this slaughter? And what was the mysterious cult? Ostensibly the face of the organisation was Joseph Kibweteere, once a government minister and a devout catholic who had founded a pair of private catholic schools. According to Henri E. Cauvin in a March 2000 report for the *New York Times*, in 1989 he became involved with the Movement upon meeting three women: Credonia Mwerinde, Ursula Komuhangi and Angela Mugisha. Mwerinde's father, Paulo Kashaku, claimed to have seen visions of Jesus, the Virgin Mary and St Joseph. It was at his behest that his daughters, who also claimed to have received visitations, went out into the world to spread the Virgin's message. Despite Kibweteere nominally being in charge, Mwerinde is suspected to have been the true architect behind the operation. Indeed, among the devout she earned the nickname "the programmer".

Together this group began attracting others to their cause. Members were instructed to sell all of their belongings and come to live at Kibweteere's home. At one point there were over 200 of the devout under his roof. Eventually tensions began to grow between the cult members and Kibweteere's family. His own children were purportedly denied food and were beaten savagely. The family was also forced to sell valuable property and Theresa, Kibweteere's wife at the time, awoke one morning to find the cult members burning her clothes.

Finally, the family decided enough was enough and contacted the authorities. Kibweteere and the cult members were forced to leave, but his family assured him that he could return, though he never did. In a 2000 interview with the *Guardian*, Theresa blamed Credonia Mwerinde. "Whatever she said, people did," Theresa stated. "She was sent by Satan".

Thrown out into the street, and with the figurehead of the Movement abandoned by his family, what was the cult to do now? With the funds raised by their various members, they constructed a compound at Kanungu, a luscious area with beautiful green valleys that hid the groups activities from any prying eyes. Here they built a church, houses, offices and even a school. The complex was known as ishayuriro rya Maria, or 'rescue place for the Virgin Mary'. The compound was also referred to as Noah's Ark, the cult's members believing that here they would be able to escape the apocalypse and pass into a new kingdom.

© Getty Images

> “COMMUNICATION HAD TO BE THROUGH SIGN LANGUAGE ONLY. THIS WAS DUE TO THE FEAR OF ACCIDENTALLY BEARING FALSE WITNESS THROUGH SPEECH, SUCH WAS THE GROUP’S COMMITMENT”

RIGHT Potentially poisonous millet is tipped discarded by a worried local in the wake of the murders

BELOW The carnage discovered at the compound was just a glimpse of the atrocities committed by the cult

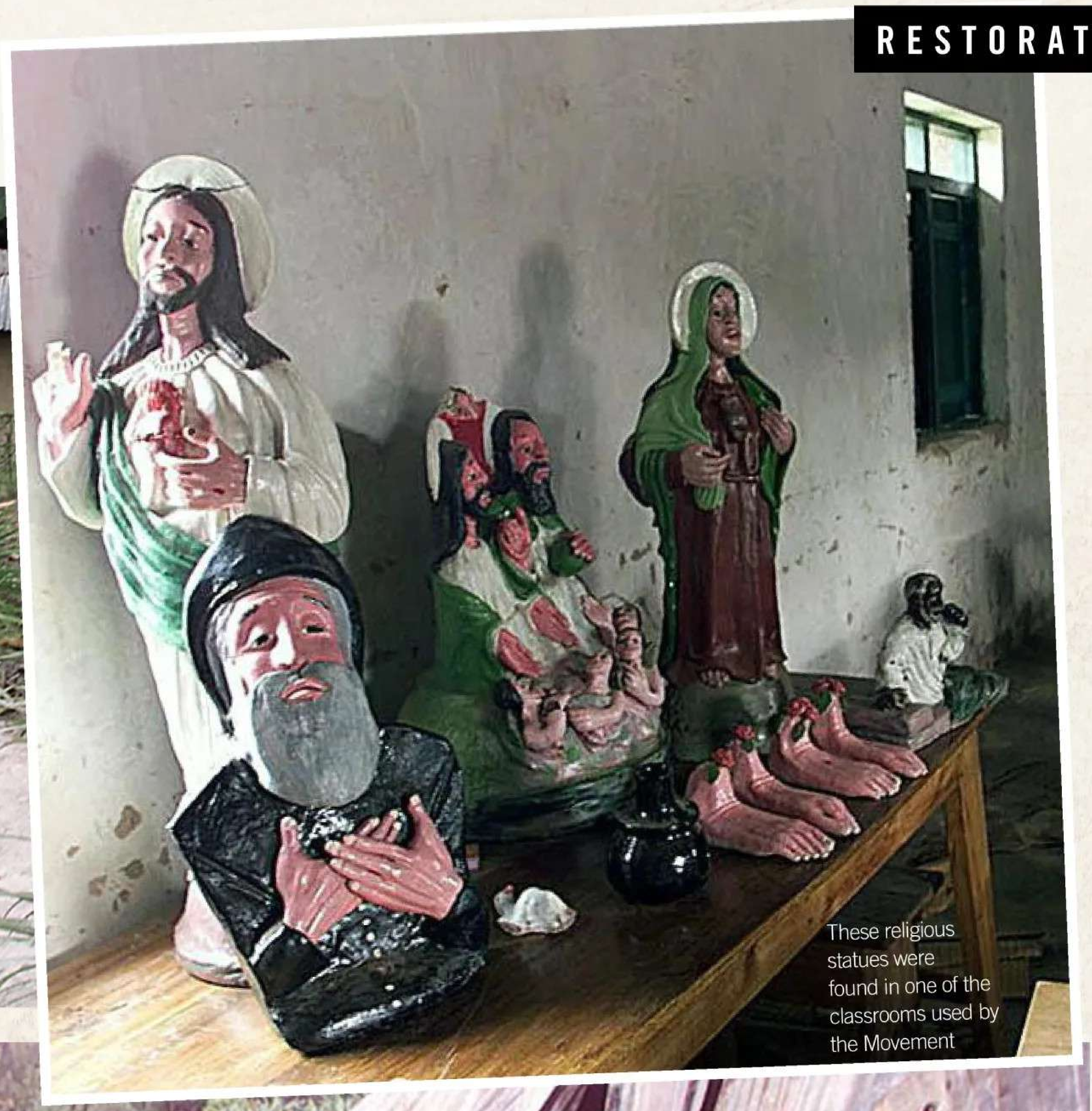
BELIEFS AND STRUCTURE

When the cult members died in the fire at Kanungu, much of the information surrounding their activities was lost with them. However, over the decades researchers have been able to piece together a little about their beliefs and hierarchy. Kibweteere appears to have been in charge of a group of six women and six men who were known as the ‘twelve apostles’. A number of defrocked priests and nuns were among the group’s leaders, including two who were inducted into the movement by Kibweteere, an action that roused the wrath of the church and saw him excommunicated. Below this the movement had three tiers. The first was the lowest and was for those new to the cult. These beginners were made to wear black. The second tier wore green and was for those who had sworn to follow the ten commandments absolutely. The final group were dressed in green and white. Disturbingly, these individuals were those who had stated their willingness to “die in the ark”.

The key piece of surviving evidence as to the cult’s beliefs and religious practices is a pamphlet entitled *A Timely Message from Heaven: The End of the Present Times*. First published in 1991, so important was this document that any would-be members of the cult were required to re-read it frequently over four to six days before being granted admittance. In its pages the pamphlet told of oncoming wars, outbreaks of disease and other terrifying predictions of the dark future that awaited mankind.

The cult was strict in its beliefs. All material possessions had to be given up upon entry, the items then sold in order to fund the cult’s activities. Members were to abstain from sexual activity, with no exception for those that were married. Fasting was common and soap and other cosmetics were purportedly outlawed. Most bizarrely, silence was to be absolute and any communication had to be conducted through sign language. This was due to the fear of accidentally bearing false witness through speech, such was the group’s fervent commitment to the ten commandments.

Nonetheless, despite the strict lifestyle, the cult continued to grow in both power and membership. How many members the cult had at its peak is not known, with estimates ranging everywhere from 1,000 to 4,000. In 1994 the Movement was registered as a non-governmental organisation but four years later Ugandan media reported that this status had been was revoked. These reports are said to have referenced government concern over the hygiene at the compound as well as breaches of public health regulations (the cult discouraging medical care). Most disturbingly there were rumours of forced child labour and even of kidnapping. However, despite this the organisation was not shut down and continued to operate at Kanungu.



These religious statues were found in one of the classrooms used by the Movement

> “ACCORDING TO THE BBC, BEHIND THE RUINS OF ONE OF THE BUILDINGS WERE DEEP PITS PURPORTEDLY USED TO TORTURE THE VICTIMS”

THE MASSACRE

The end began when the leaders proclaimed that Mary had informed them of the date of the world's destruction: 31 December 1999. Naturally, when members of the cult awoke on New Year's Day in the year 2000 and discovered that the world was very much still turning, they became angry and asked for their possessions back. The situation seemed to be rectified when at the beginning of March Credonia Mwerinde proclaimed that Mary was one her way – this time for real. Any members of the cult not at the compound were urged to make sure they returned by the 17th of that month, with some members travelling to convince wayward acolytes to come back. A celebration was to be held and in preparation the cult purchased large amounts of Coca-Cola and killed cattle. One leader, Dominic Kataribabo, bought a large amount of highly flammable sulphuric acid. On the night of the 17th, as the party was in full swing, local villagers were startled by the sound of a large explosion.

The following morning, the local police headquarters received word of a fire with some casualties. What was initially suspected to have been a group suicide began to appear infinitely more sinister with 153 more bodies found at a house 25 miles away. Over the subsequent weeks more and more bodies were discovered – mainly of women and children – at a number of properties owned by the cult. Reports vary, but it appears many had been poisoned and others had been stabbed or strangled to death. Due to the fact that these bodies had already begun to decompose, police believed that the murders were committed at least a week prior to the massacre. According to the BBC, behind the ruins of one of the buildings were deep pits that were purportedly used to torture the victims, but the exact nature of their suffering will probably never be known.

In the immediate aftermath there were many questions left to be answered; one was whether the orchestrators of the bloodbath were among the victims or whether they had escaped. Ugandan police issued arrest warrants on 6 April 2000 for Kibweteere, Mwerinde and four other leaders, though at the time of writing none have been found. In 2014 the Ugandan Police Force purportedly stated that there was evidence that Kibweteere and some of the other fugitives were hiding in Malawi. However, according to a BBC article, there is doubt as to whether Kibweteere would have been fit enough to travel. Nearly ten years later their whereabouts remain a mystery and their crimes unpunished.

The day before the fire, the *New York Times* reported that Kibweteere's family received a mysterious package. In it was the Movement's certificate of registration, various other documents and a copy of the Ten Commandments. His family believed Kibweteere had sent it, perhaps in the hope that they would continue the cult's evil work.

© Getty Images

WAGING WAR ON THE WACO CULT

AFTER WEEKS OF INTENSE NEGOTIATIONS IN AN ATTEMPT TO ARREST CULT LEADER DAVID KORESH AND HIS DISCIPLES, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REACHED BREAKING POINT AND A VIOLENT BATTLE BROKE OUT

WORDS **TANITA MATTHEWS**

David Koresh was the messiah; more specifically he was the Lamb of God, and his arrival, foretold in the Book of Revelations, signified the second coming of Christ, would unlock the meaning of the holy Seven Seals and bring about the End Times. At least, that was the belief of Koresh and his loyal followers, the Branch Davidians. The religious sect, a breakaway group from the Protestant Christian order the Seventh Day Adventist Church, had resided on a rural 77-acre property about ten miles outside Waco, Texas, known as Mount Carmel since the late 50s. Before he was their 'fearless' leader he was Vernon Wayne Howell, a lonely child born to a teenage single mother and raised by his grandparents in Texas. Koresh came to Mount Carmel in 1981 under his birth name. By the mid-1980s he had changed his name and overthrown the leaders at Mount Carmel, dominating the group with his interpretations of the Bible.

However, Koresh's divine instructions to the Branch Davidians were raising eyebrows among the FBI. Accusations of illegal weapons, child abuse, tax evasion, involuntary servitude and that Koresh himself was committing statutory rape were raising serious concerns among government officials, who felt increasingly compelled to intervene. On the morning of 28 February 1993, armed with weapons, a search warrant for the compound and a warrant for the arrest of Koresh and the Branch Davidians, the ATF intended to raid their home. Koresh had prophesied that the group would be killed during Passover week between 6 and 13 April and that he and his disciples would be resurrected in order to set up God's Kingdom on Earth. This day came and passed, but when the media tipped off Mount Carmel's residents that armed FBI agents were on their way the scene is set for a vicious battle and what would become the longest siege in US law-enforcement history.

For 50 days, FBI agencies attempted to rouse Branch Davidians from their concrete castle. A number of members willingly left the compound, but many remained inside. Koresh promised he would emerge once he had finished the manuscript for his decoding of the sacred Seven Seals, but concerns about the safety of the children inside Mount Carmel were raised at the top tier of government when President Bill Clinton ordered that the siege be ended.

On the morning of 19 April, FBI agents on the front line tried to force those who remained inside to come out. They had badly underestimated the group's determination to do what they thought was God's bidding.

> “ KORESH HAD PROPHESIED THAT THE GROUP WOULD BE KILLED DURING PASSOVER WEEK AND THAT HE AND HIS DISCIPLES WOULD BE RESURRECTED ”

INSET A fatal inferno engulfs the Branch Davidians' stronghold. The assault on the compound would claim 86 lives

All images: © Getty Images

19 APRIL 1993

05:50

Lead negotiator Byron Sage (one of 52 negotiators) calls the compound via a secure line and speaks to Koresh's deputy, Steve Schneider. Sage tells him that today is the day agents will descend upon Mount Carmel to force Koresh out. An enraged Schneider reportedly slammed down the receiver, pulled the telephone to a doorway and hurled it out into the front yard.

05:55

The FBI's elite tactical unit, the Hostage Rescue Team (HRT), strikes first. Armoured Combat Engineering Vehicles named 'CEV1' and 'CEV2' approach the Branch Davidian stronghold. Their mission is to punch holes into the buildings so that doses of the chemical agent CSV, otherwise known as tear gas, can be pumped into the building.

06:00

Covert devices planted by the FBI pick something suspicious up – a man inside the compound saying "Everybody wake up, let's start to pray", then, "Pablo, have you poured it yet?"... "Huh?"... "Have you poured it yet?"... "In the hallway" ..."Things are poured, right?" Meanwhile outside, one of the armoured vehicles is ordered to spray two bottles of tear gas into the building.

06:05

An armoured vehicle rips through the front wall of the building, leaving an eight-foot by ten-foot hole by the front door. Inside, the Davidians feel the whole building shake. Armed and ready to fight back, they shoot at agents and their armoured vehicles. A message is called out on the loudspeaker declaring that this is the last chance those inside have to surrender.

06.10

On the surveillance tapes, a man can be heard saying, "Don't pour it all out, we might need some later" and "Throw the tear gas back out." Meanwhile, FBI negotiator Sage calls the Davidians again, telling them, "It's time for people to come out." But the man on the other end of the phone line disagrees and tells him, "No way."

06.12

The conversation about the siege and what is happening outside of the walls of Mount Carmel continues over the FBI surveillance tapes. FBI agents listening in hear Branch Davidians proclaim, "They're gonna kill us", then, "They don't want to kill us."

Texas law at the time allowed sexual relations with girls as young as 14 so long as their parents consented. David sought out Branch Davidians' young virgins to help him father 24 'holy' children

ABOVE Several weeks of attempts to negotiate with the Branch Davidians at Mount Carmel culminated in a violent battle that saw dozens of men, women and children lose their lives

06:31

Gassing of the building begins. The HRT fire plastic non-incendiary tear gas rounds through windows as part of the attack. However, the Branch Davidians have been stockpiling gas masks for weeks, as commanded by Koresh, who prophesied the attack would come. The children inside are without gas masks, so adults soak rags in water and place them over their faces.

07.23

The conversation about the substance being poured in the building continues as agents listen in: "The fuel has to go all around to get started," says one male Branch Davidian. A second male responds, "Well, there are two cans here, if that's poured soon."

07.30

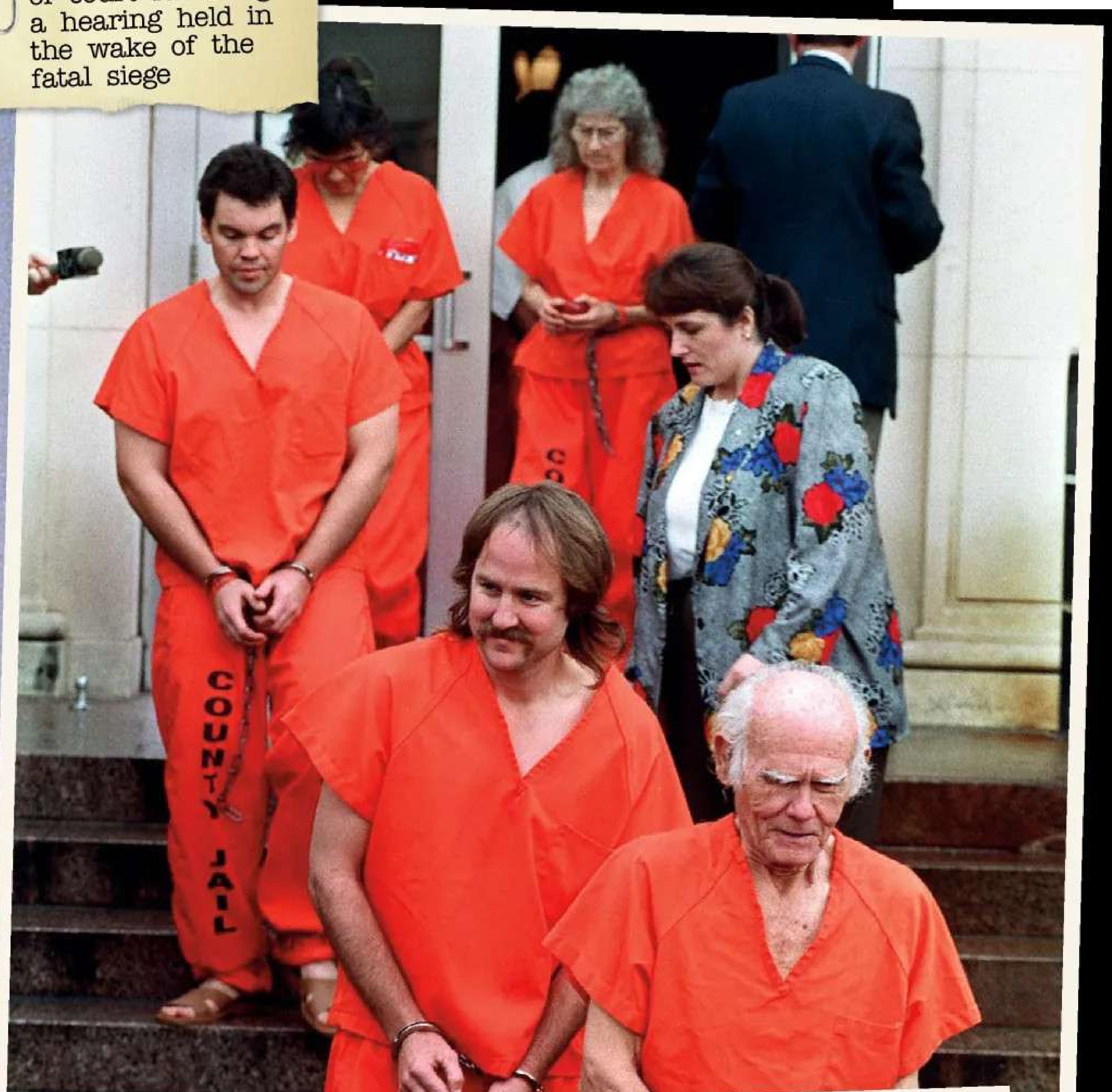
Continuing the attempt to smoke the Branch Davidians out, 'CEV1' is redeployed to the front of the building, where it pumps tear gas inside while being fired at by armed Branch Davidians. Meanwhile, FBI surveillance records a meeting between several unidentified males that indicates that there is "nothing left" of the two cans of Coleman fuel they had stockpiled.

07.48

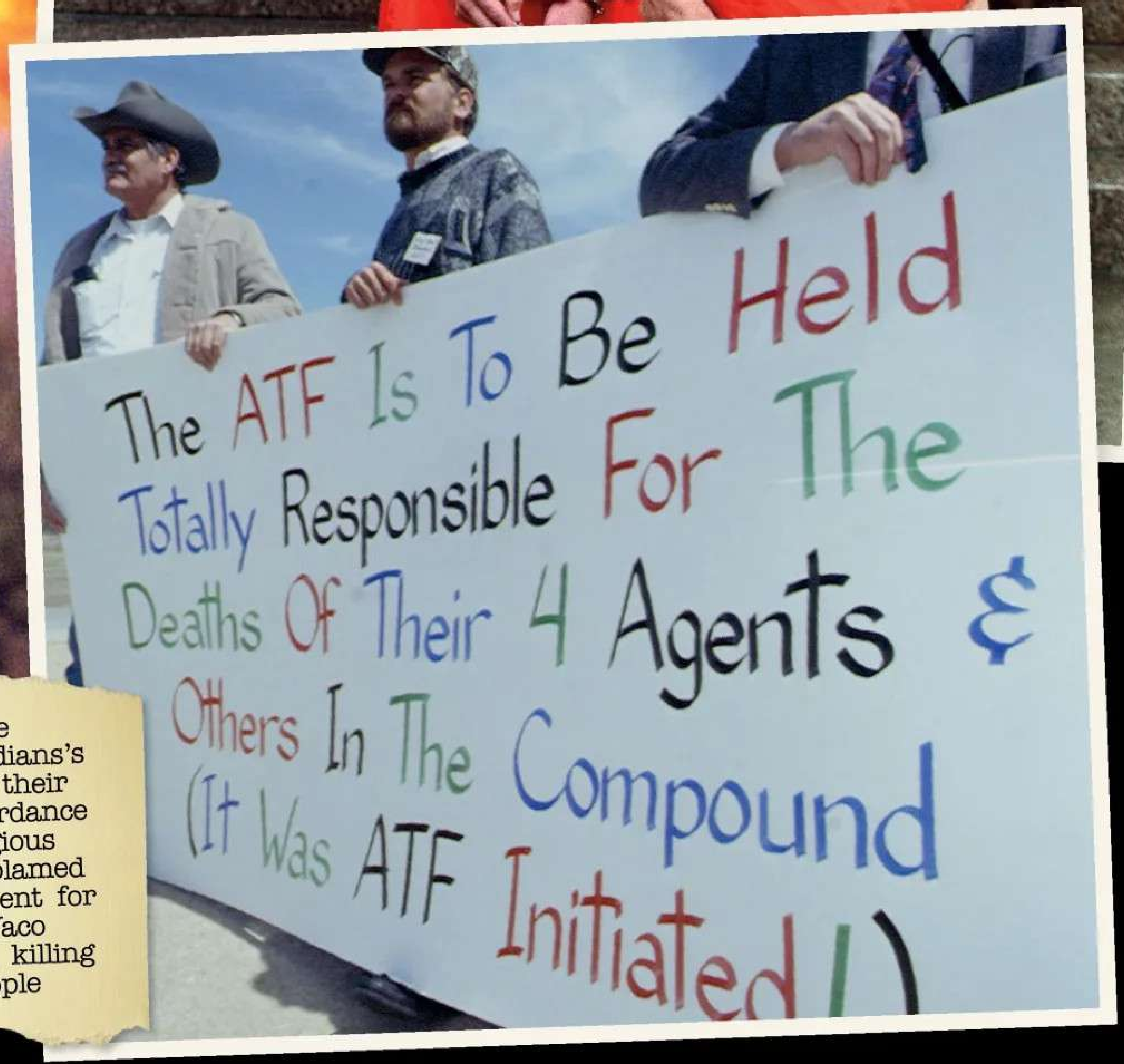
The Davidians are not the only ones being recorded in their conversations. The FBI records one FBI Hostage Rescue Team agent requesting permission to fire military-style tear gas shells to break through an underground concrete bunker where they believe some of the cult members may be hiding out. He receives permission and fires two shells.

07.58

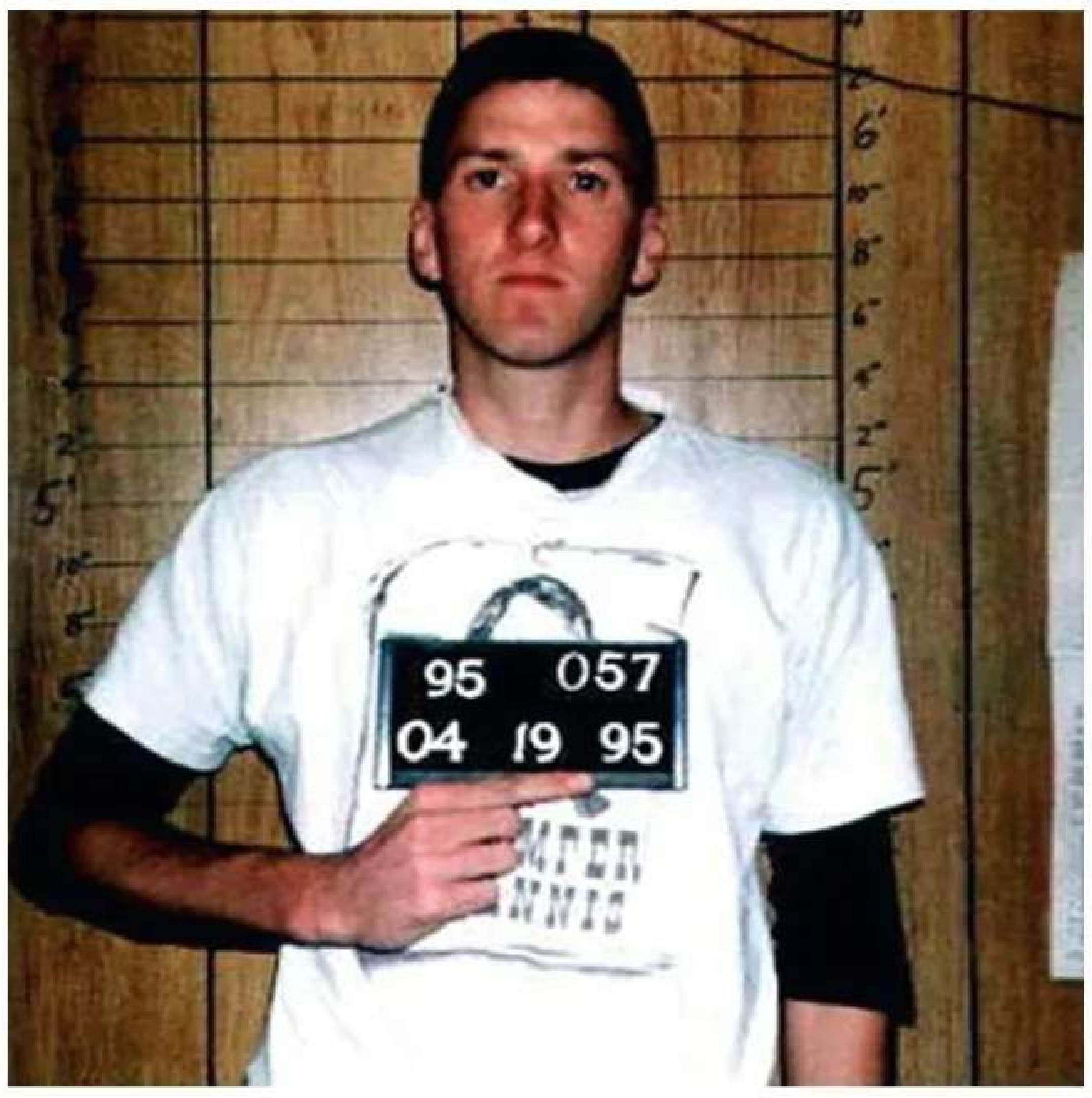
'CEV2' attacks once again, using a battering ram to smash a hole into the second floor of the Mount Carmel compound; within minutes a vehicle has reached the rear of the building, where another hole is punched into the compound wall before the vehicles then withdraw.



Leading Branch Davidians file out of court following a hearing held in the wake of the fatal siege


The ATF Is To Be Held Totally Responsible For The Deaths Of Their 4 Agents & Others In The Compound (It Was ATF Initiated!)

Some groups supported the Branch Davidians's right to live their lives in accordance to their religious beliefs and blamed the government for going into Waco gung-ho and killing innocent people



THE RIPPLE EFFECT

ONE SPECTATOR OF THE SIEGE TOOK DRASTIC MEASURES IN ITS AFTERMATH AS HE SOUGHT 'REVENGE' AGAINST THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

As Mount Carmel turned into a battle ground the world watched in fascination. Stalls were set up selling merchandise; news reporters gathered in camps waiting for developments in the story; and members of the public simply stood on the sidelines gawking as the fighting unfolded. One spectator was a 24-year-old decorated Gulf War veteran named Timothy McVeigh, whose name would become as ingrained in the minds of the American people as Waco itself.

McVeigh believed the government had committed mass murder at Mount Carmel, an event that spurred a murderous rage within McVeigh that would have disastrous consequences. On 19 April 1995, the second anniversary of the fire, McVeigh lit a two-minute fuse linked to 4,800 pounds of explosives inside a Ryder truck that he'd parked in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City. The explosion killed 168 people, 19 of them children.

08.08

With no sign of Koresh or any of the Branch Davidians, tactical attacks continue on the building. A concrete construction pit downwind from the main quarters and the concrete bunker that was earlier attacked is now set upon. Three pyrotechnic military tear gas rounds are shot in an attempt to penetrate the structure, but they bounce off it.

09.00

The Branch Davidians unfurl a white sheet banner from an upstairs window. Orange scrawled writing reads, "We want our phone fixed." Wispy clouds of smoke now reach skywards from the grounds of the blazing main building.

09.13

'CEV1' breaks through the front door of Mount Carmel to deliver more gas, further upping the ante. Those inside the building continue to shoot at the advancing combat vehicles inching their way beyond their thresholds, firing several hundred rounds from various positions.

10:00

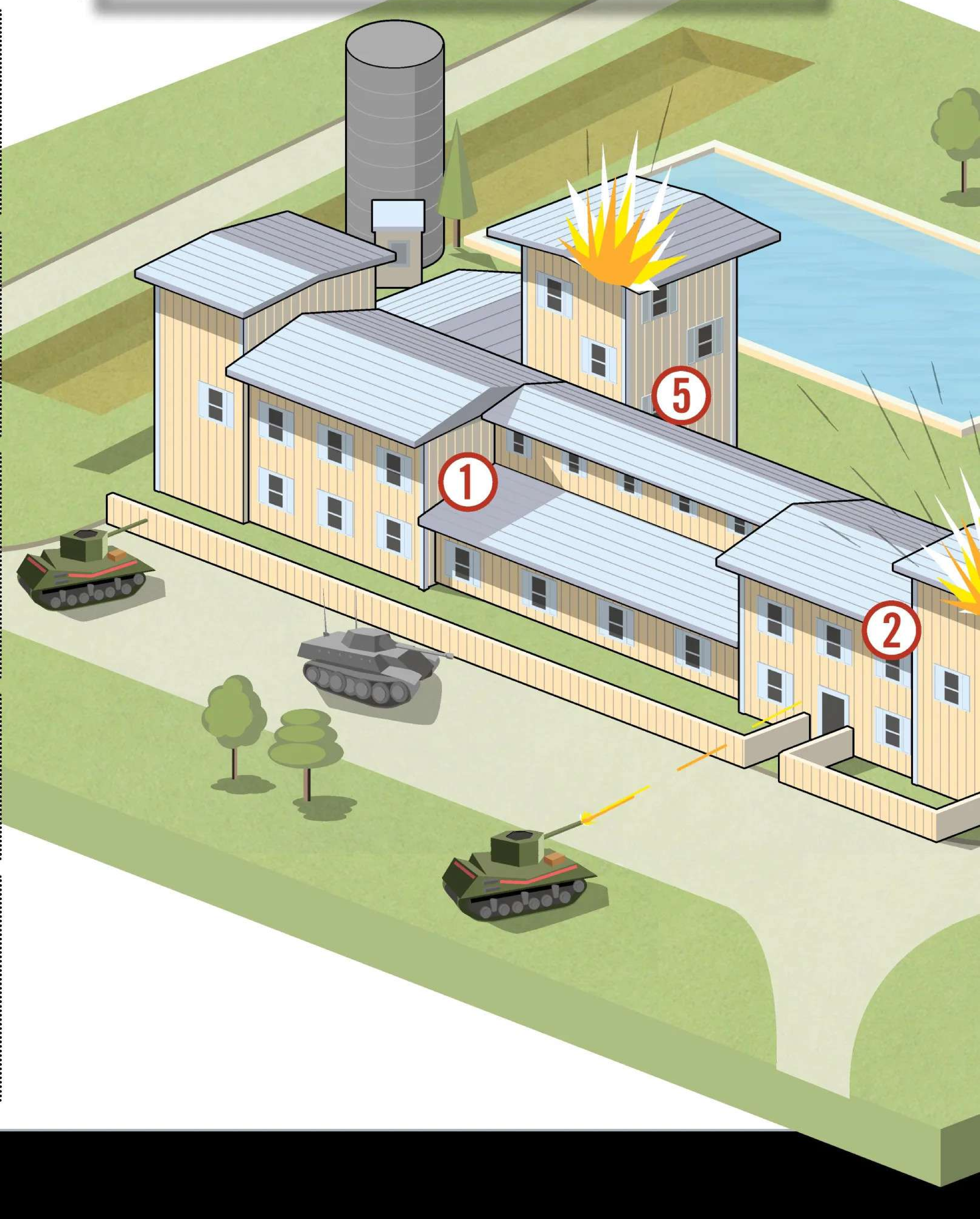
A man is seen waving a rag from a doorway. The FBI agents query among themselves as to whether this is a white flag and call out to him over the loudspeaker system: "If that is a white flag, come out and surrender." He doesn't. At the same time, a man believed to be Schneider comes out from what remains of the front door to retrieve the phone.

11.30

The attack is so vicious that the vehicles deployed by the FBI are starting to suffer. Due to mechanical difficulties on the original 'CEV2' a replacement is deployed to breach the rear side of the compound and continue gassing those inside. Meanwhile, tactics inside the building are taking a shocking turn.

NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE

ACCUSATIONS AS TO WHO REALLY STARTED THE FIRE HAVE PLAGUED THE WACO SIEGE FOR DECADES



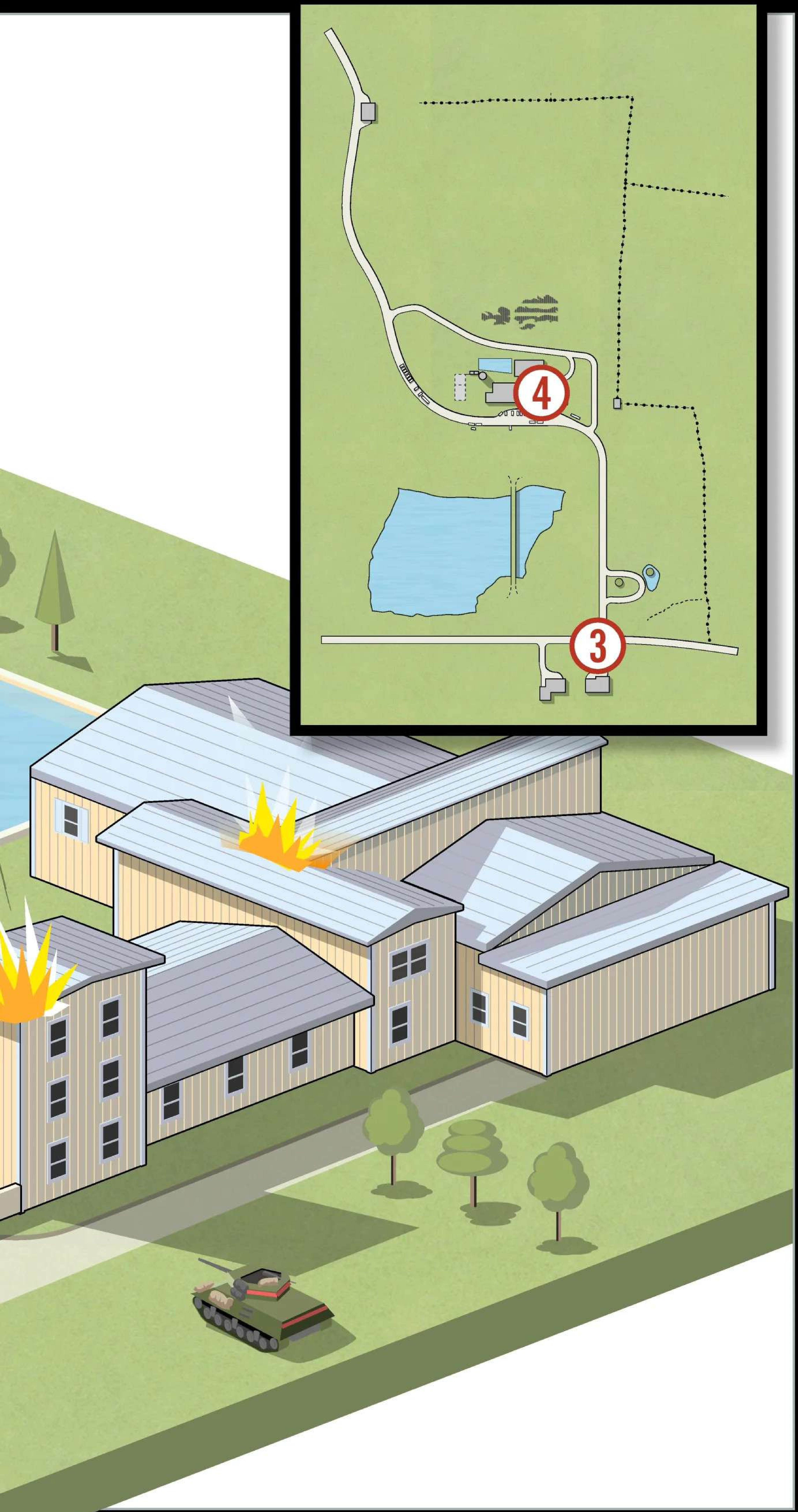
1 FIRE STARTERS
Remarks picked up on the FBI surveillance devices indicate that the Branch Davidians started a fire in the complex at around 11.30. Agents hear them say, "I want a fire", "Keep that fire going" and "Do you think I could light this soon?" Some of the surviving Branch Davidians will later claim fuel was poured inside the building, but some disagree.

2 THE BLAZE SPREADS
Smoke rises from the building. Within minutes flames lick at the left of the front door on the second floor, then the far right side of the front of the building, then at a third spot on the backside. Meanwhile, member Ruth Riddle exits the building. In her jacket she is carrying Koresh's promised manuscript on the Seven Seals.

3 SLOW RESPONSE
Emergency calls are made to the fire brigade. Two Waco Fire Department trucks are dispatched quickly followed by two more from Bellmead Fire Department. When the Waco fire trucks arrive at the checkpoints they are held up for 15 minutes before they are allowed to pass. They are shortly followed by Bellmead's trucks as they head towards the burning building full of people.

4 MOUNT CARMEL CENTER DESTROYED
The fire sweeps through the commune. What sounds like gunfire erupts as the ammunition stockpiled by the Branch Davidians burns and grenades melt from the heat of the flames. It takes less than an hour for the entire building to collapse.

5 TOTAL TRAGEDY
At 15.45 law enforcement confirms that Koresh is dead. He is one of 76 fatalities, among them 23 children and two pregnant women. Nine bodies are found on the concrete bunker at the bottom of the watchtower, one inside the bunker, with dozens in adjacent chambers. Nine people escaped before the fire engulfed the building. They're transported by helicopter to a hospital in Dallas.



MT CARMEL ERUPTS
A MESSAGE FROM GOD
WHAT'S UP, VERN?
THE COMPOUND
WACO
MT CARMEL
THE SINFUL EPISODE!

THE FIRE BURNS ON

THE FIGHT FOR VICTORY WAS OVER, BUT THE BRANCH DAVIDIANS'S BATTLE TO BE REUNITED WITH CHRIST CONTINUED

While those consumed in the fire were being counted and the embers of the fire still smouldered, the battle of right and wrong was fully aflame. Only the day after the fire, a CNN-Gallup poll declared that 73 percent of Americans thought that the FBI had acted 'responsibly' at the compound and 93 percent of American people blamed Koresh for the deaths of his followers. The consensus as to who was to blame became clear: the Branch Davidians had intentionally started the fire in circumstances parallel to a Jonestown-like mass suicide. ATF spokesperson David Troy described Koresh as a "cheap thug who interpret[ed] the Bible through the barrel of a gun," but vocal right-wing communities cast aspersions on the secular narrative at play.

In July 2000 a government-appointed investigator hired a specialist firm to stage a re-enactment of the siege. The results saw the FBI cleared of starting the fire, but there were still 14 surviving adults and 30 surviving children of the siege, many of whom contested this. Eight of the members were convicted on charges of voluntary manslaughter and using firearms in the commission of a crime. All were given jail sentences that had been served by 2007, leaving them free to tell their side of the story.

The 25th anniversary of the fire sparked new interest in the case. Those who were merely children at the time were now adults. Many have since appeared in documentaries and spoken via news articles to tell of their experiences inside Mount Carmel. Some of the survivors believe Koresh started the fire while others completely deny the idea that he would have done such a thing. Those still loyal to David believe he will come back in a new form and are prepared to spend their lives waiting for the man they believe to be Jesus Christ.

ABOVE The Waco siege fascinated the public, who largely sided with the government's view that the Branch Davidians at Mount Carmel had been indoctrinated by Koresh into a dangerous 'cult'

DEATH CULT MURDERS

CULTS SOMETIMES KILL WITH SILENCE, AND BEFORE 1995'S TOKYO SUBWAY SARIN ATTACK, JAPAN'S SINISTER AUM SHINRIKYO WENT TO GREAT PAINS TO SHUT ITS ENEMIES UP

WORDS **DR CHARLIE OUGHTON**

The journey into work is the splintered blue-grey of your average rush-hour Monday morning. The clothes feel too tight and you're trapped in an underground carriage with other people who look similarly like the world is going to end. Hitching slightly, it seems a cold is coming as your nose runs a little and a tiny, sharp needle drags from your throat to prick at your watery eyes. Looking up to steady yourself, your vision is obscured. Are you really that tired? It's too warm, too tight and breathing has become a conscious effort. Straighten up. The other well-mannered shapes appear to be holding napkins to their mouths. Thump. Thwud. Shoosd. The thrum of the train is being gradually tuned out by gargling sounds as bodies around you retch yellow strings of liquid then drop to the floor… No one noticed the five gentlemen who placed potted newspapers down a little earlier. They vanished before the sarin poison seeped through the newsprint, took to the air and crept into the folk they left behind. On that day of 20 March 1995, those men maimed more than 5,000 of Tokyo's citizens and left a dozen dead.

Cult killings are not just about supposedly enabling the 'chosen' to ascend to the next life or about proving devotion. The men who committed the sarin attack on the Tokyo subway system were part of Aum Shinrikyo, a religious movement. Their leader, Chizuo Matsumoto (or Shoko Asahara, as he was later known), had told them he was the Lamb of God and that their actions were part of a campaign to do no less than kick-start the end of the world.

Fighting against them from the start was Tsutsumi Sakamoto, a lawyer who specialised in smashing the false idols of cult commerce with the book of law. The case's climax began when camera crews took the masses to his remains on 6 September 1995, six years after his murder. Aum Shinrikyo's members were found guilty of the savage killings. So what was it about Tsutsumi that had given him the power to take on the might of Aum Shinrikyo's megalomaniac 'messiah' in the first place, and, crucially, did Tsutsumi stop Matsumoto's 'second coming'?

RELIGION, CULTS AND CRACKPOTS

The reason why Aum Shinrikyo is so frightening is because it challenges how we think of cults. As stated in *The World of Sociology*, we tend to think of cults as "small, radical, religious groups" considered as "dangerous or harmful". They have strange beliefs, charismatic leaders and people following orders without thought. They appear very different to our ideas of 'proper' beliefs that are shared by mass society and have a considerable historical legacy behind them. Religious beliefs trusted by millions include Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism – and so it was that these very systems were incorporated by Chizuo Matsumoto into his own organisation. Calling his practice Aum Shinrikyo, Matsumoto's project name translated as 'Supreme Truth'.

Possessed of a 'Jesus' beard and swathed in robes, Matsumoto appeared in Aum Shinrikyo's promotional videos as a cartoon. It would be comical if it wasn't so terrifying. In animation strikingly similar to that of the 1980s Japanese myth-fantasy series *Ulysses 31*, he presented himself as a conquering hero. He changed his name to Shoko Asahara and, in line with so many other cult leaders, declared himself Christ.

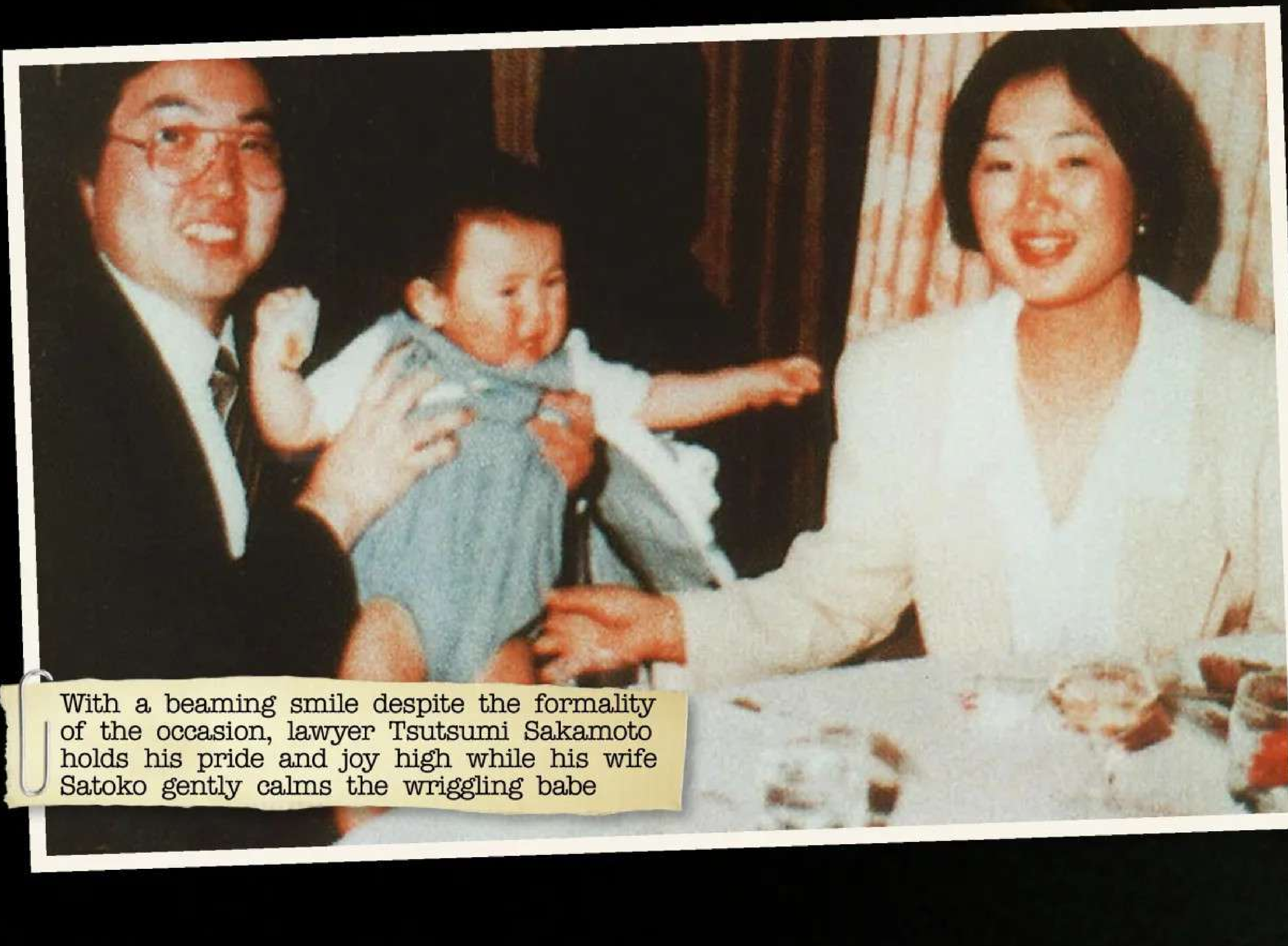
'Weak-minded fools' is, conversely, the way we tend to characterise – and dismiss – cult followers. As Dr Linda Dubrow-Marshall, an expert on coercion at the University of Salford, comments, "Anyone can be vulnerable to cultic influence and it is naïve to think that being educated will protect us from it. On the contrary, being educated often includes being open to new and original ideas." The followers who planned the 1995 sarin attack for Asahara included scientists and a medical doctor. They truly believed their leader was the messiah. They believed him and in many cases, they killed for him. They were terrorists. Psychopathology professor Susumu Oda has stated such cultists may be attracted by the image of the man of learning as a father figure, particularly in Japan where the orderly 'salaryman' stereotype may have been considered to have deprived people of that parental figure in their own childhood. What's more, Asahara seemed to offer a genuine progression of the human mind, with magazines such as *Twilight Zone* stating his claim that he had supernatural powers, including that of levitation.

Blood will, however, tell, and it is true that there was something special in Asahara's veins and in that of his followers, especially after they had ritually supped from his reddened cup. That 'something' wasn't alcohol (the standard toxin of Christian communion) but LSD. Long associated with New Age science, art and belief-based movements, LSD can induce hallucinations and mind-altering experiences that may have made Asahara's preaching seem plausible. His little cult is recorded as having amassed around 10,000 members in Japan alone.

ENTER THE LAWYER

Tsutsumi Sakamoto was an idealistic lawyer with a wife, Satoko, and a baby by the name of Tatsuhiko. It was the 1980s and Aum Shinrikyo had just begun operations. With youth on his side, Tsutsumi wanted to make a difference and seeing the shadowy and coercive practices of some belief-based organisations, he began to make a name for himself as an anti-cult specialist.

Faith-based organisations, no matter how ideologically outlandish they seem, are protected under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Japan adhered to that agreement. To officially stop abuse such as blackmail, Tsutsumi would have to show that the groups were actually breaking laws.



With a beaming smile despite the formality of the occasion, lawyer Tsutsumi Sakamoto holds his pride and joy high while his wife Satoko gently calms the wriggling babe

"FIGHTING AGAINST AUM SHINRIKYO FROM THE START WAS LAWYER TSUTSUMI SAKAMOTO"

The speck in the middle (in front of the camera) is Shoko Asahara. He lounges atop a throne and listens to his own voice as minions lap up his every word

© Getty Images

AUM AND ON

BECAUSE OF CRIMES ASSOCIATED WITH ITS PAST INCARNATIONS, AUM SHINRIKYO HAS BEEN REBORN

Many of Aum Shinrikyo's members are now behind bars, but it is important to note the organisation did not accept responsibility for many of the crimes of which it was accused. Nor can it be assumed that because some of its prior members committed criminal acts that they are a reflection on the movement in general – researcher Robert Lifton found through interviews that many members were not aware of the violence. The organisation was stripped of its religious status by the government in 1996 and from it emerged organisations including Aleph and Hikari no Wa. Aleph's website reveals its philosophies, dojos and FAQs. The public relations section's polite prose discusses the compensation it pays to victims of "the so-called Aum Supreme Truth relating case". The money is detailed almost in an accountancy style and member figures are not listed. Now known as Aleph, the group is closely monitored by the authorities.

But faith is difficult to challenge. It is better to prevent people from becoming victims in the first place. Anyone who has a belief system will likely have based it as much on their own experiences as on the words of a text deemed holy. Therefore, the easiest way to remove the power of an organisation is to make it prove its claims and show the followers their messiahs are often just very naughty boys. As anyone who has seen a fake mystic exposed in the media knows, bad PR can be the non-believer's best pal as word of non-materialised miracles spreads. The second way to remove their power is to prevent the preacher from procuring more smoke and mirrors by cutting off the money they need to hire office space, distribute materials and recruit more paying members.

PRESS POISON

Crime is considered something of an anomaly in Japan's orderly society. The social structure is very family orientated and departure from that tradition is frowned upon. So Tsutsumi worked with the Association of Aum Shinrikyo Victims, who had complained of kidnappings and financial irregularities. He decided to go to the popular press to warn people what was happening so they themselves could help stop the spread to friends and relatives. Tokyo Broadcasting System was one of Japan's seven key television channels and part of a trusted media company with a heritage dating back to the 1950s. In a recorded interview with the channel, Tsutsumi detailed his concerns about Aum Shinrikyo and debunked their beliefs.

What, as an ethics-focused lawyer, he didn't bargain for was the impact of ratings on his new partner's actions. While a lawyer may interest the intellectual viewer, the promise of a charismatic cult leader is an audience coup. Subsequent courts heard that a deal had been struck between Tokyo Broadcasting System and Aum Shinrikyo where it was agreed the channel would show Tsutsumi's interview to the cult before broadcasting on condition that the religious organisation kept it quiet. In return, Asahara himself would appear on camera. At the trial however, company president Hirozo Isozaki denied that any such deal existed and said their involvement was "only one of a series of factors" that led to what happened next.

Normality returned. A little over a week later, all was still at the Sakamotos' home. The interview had not yet been aired and he was asleep with Satoko. Tatsuhiko was close at hand in his cradle. But as the clock ticked towards 3 a.m., figures stole into their darkened bedroom. Tsutsumi began to stir and was immediately struck with a vicious hammer blow to the head. Then someone started applying pressure around the lawyer's neck. While not a large man, he resisted as his attacker squeezed before potassium chloride was injected into his body to hasten death. Satoko was kicked in the stomach as she watched. She begged the attackers to spare her child, but her frantic cries ignored. Both were given lethal injections.

To frustrate any future efforts to identify the victims their teeth were broken, then all three bodies were placed inside metal drums and transported to three separate locations. The family's faces would soon stare out from posters asking about their whereabouts, but police wouldn't uncover their remains for over six years, by which point they were little more than bones.

ABOVE These men were felled by the sarin attack. It is not known whether they survived

Evidently comfortable with using legal force, Aum Shinrikyo continued their brutal campaign against anyone who dared to challenge them. On 27 June 1994 they killed eight and injured hundreds in a sarin attack aimed at a group of judges overseeing a trial against the group. Yet, as heinous as this was, it was in fact a dry run for an even deadlier attempt in 1995 that would unleash terror on the Tokyo subway and also lead to the culprits' demise.

CAPTURE AND COMEUPPANCE

Ultimately, the cult's bullishness proved to be their undoing. The sarin attacks merely highlighted their existence and police raided them. After their interrogation, a sizeable but sombre pack was dispatched to Mount Okenashi in Niigata Prefecture. There they uncovered the remains. Tsutsumi and Satoko were identified by their hair and fingerprints. They were reunited. Asahara had told his followers the child's death was a blessing as Tatsuhiko would be "born again in a higher-level world," as he "ended up not being raised by Sakamoto, who tried to repeat bad deeds."

Approximately 26,000 people, including the then Prime Minister, attended the family's memorial service. So great was the work that Tsutsumi had done that the thanksgiving was accompanied by the Japanese Philharmonic Orchestra, music having been one of the great loves of his life.

Today, the legacy organisations of Aum Shinrikyo are still operational. One such example is Aleph. On their website

TOP Devotees honour their Science and Technology Minister, Hideo Murai, after he was stabbed to death at their headquarters on 23 April 1995. Murai appeared on television to defend Aum Shinrikyo

LEFT These suspicious barrels were found by the police on Aum Shinrikyo's property on 22 March 1995, two days after the deadly subway sarin attack

cluttered text is topped by a crystal-blue mountain banner, suggestive of calm. As psychologist Dubrow-Marshall states, "People might stay linked to such a group as they have reinterpreted the atrocities (e.g. as a heroic act or act of war), and/or they believe that the group mission justifies atrocious means."

Psychologist Robert Lifton talked about this as "destroying the world to save it". People still sometimes cling to solidarity, though the group's former members claim they were brainwashed. Aleph is their new start.

LEGACY

Tsutsumi's work paved the way for his killers to be captured. Following the attacks Japan also amended its Religious Juridical Persons Law to oversee profit-making organisations and prevent any future abuse. Many of Aum Shinrikyo's members have been found guilty of involvement in murder and been executed.

At the close of an eight-year trial, Aum Shinrikyo's babbling leader was similarly condemned. It was suggested that the Japanese Government was wary that executing Asahara could make him a martyr among his remaining followers, but any concerns were finally put aside in on 6 July 2018, when Asahara was hung inside the Tokyo Detention Centre. Yet his death did not remove the threat of splinter cells, and according to survivors of the sarin attacks, Japan has a dangerous habit of forgetting.

EXPERT

DR LINDA DUBROW-MARSHALL

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AUM ATROCITIES

AUM SHINRIKYO BECAME KNOWN FOR ITS SARIN ATTACKS, BUT THE ORGANISATION SOUGHT CONTROL FROM FAMILY MATTERS TO NUCLEAR ATTACKS

KIDNAPPING

Aum Shinrikyo interrogated its 'family' for information on their relatives. If any of their bloodline had assets, the cultists themselves would often be sent to extract the cash by kidnap. Accounts state that 60 million yen (over £400,000) was pried from one man's hands – by his own daughters.

TORTURE

Think you're safe in the circle? Think again. Aum Shinrikyo used thermotherapy to gain enlightenment. Followers would be scalded with hot water in purification rites and their minds blasted 'clean' with force-fed narcotics. If that failed they were taken to chambers hidden in vast shipping containers and tortured.

TOXIC ASSASSINATIONS

Individuals were targeted with noxious substances. In January 1995 Hiroyuki Nagaoka, a vocal opponent of Aum, survived an attempt on his life when an acolyte sprayed the deadly nerve agent VX onto his neck. He collapsed hours later but was saved because most of the VX was blocked by his jacket collar.

DESTROYING EVIDENCE

Destruction of the body was part and parcel of the cult. Sprawled carcasses of sheep, tortured to death on the ranch, showed they had been used as experiment subjects. People who had been kidnapped were incinerated until no trace of them remained.

MANUFACTURING WMDS

Sarin is a silent killer, but Aum Shinrikyo were also said to be preparing something on a much grander scale. In 1993, in Banjawarn, Australia, locals witnessed the earth shake when a sonic boom heralded a fireball across the sky. The uranium mine police allegedly found suggests the cult were testing nuclear weapons.

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SHAME
USA'S
DOOM
GOD
HATES
FAGS
.COM
'CHRISTIAN'
CAUSED
FAG
MARRIAGE
DIVORCE
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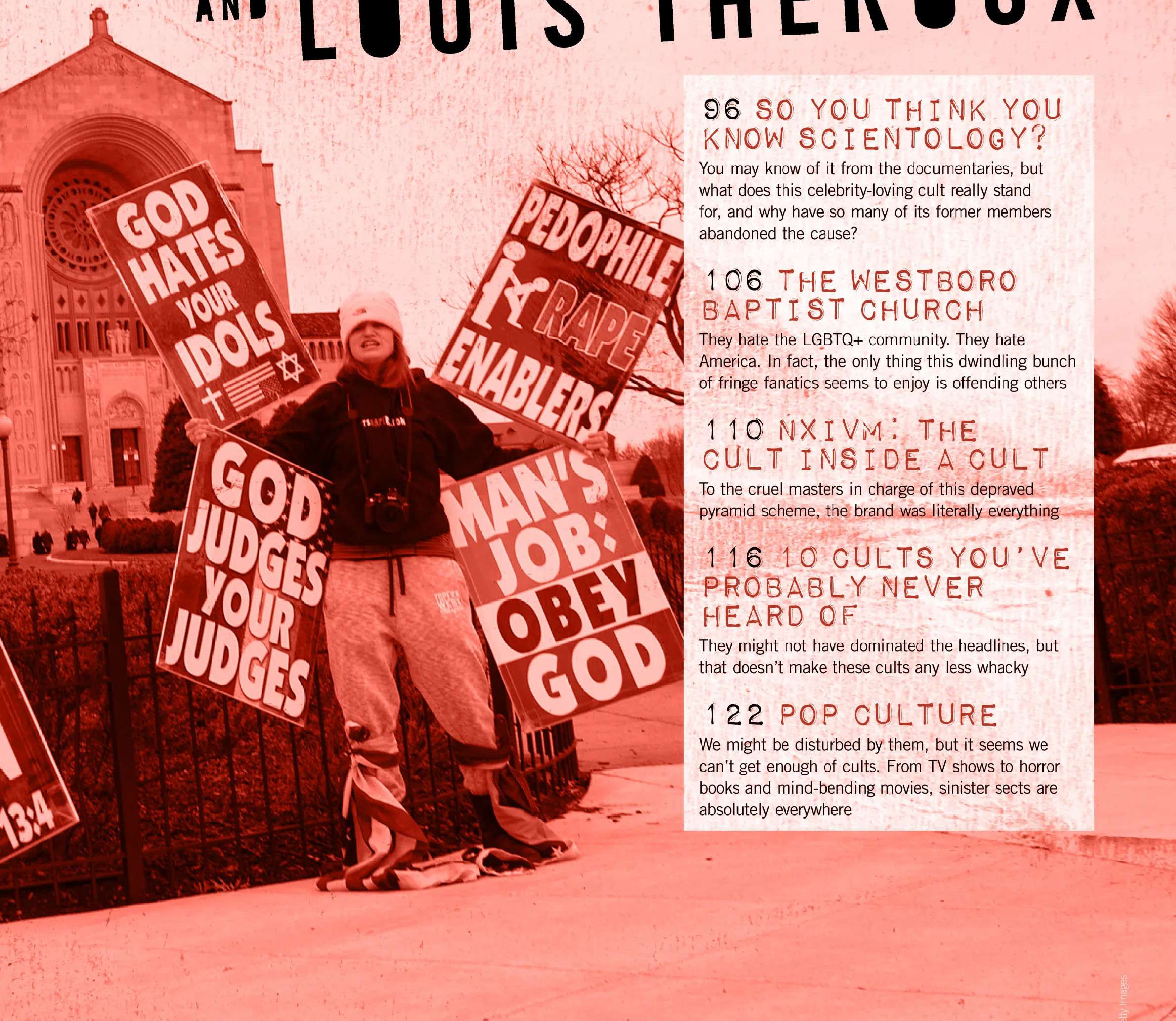
LUST, OVERLORDS AND LOUIS THEROUX



96 SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW SCIENTOLOGY?

You may know of it from the documentaries, but what does this celebrity-loving cult really stand for, and why have so many of its former members abandoned the cause?

106 THE WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH

They hate the LGBTQ+ community. They hate America. In fact, the only thing this dwindling bunch of fringe fanatics seems to enjoy is offending others

110 NXIVM: THE CULT INSIDE A CULT

To the cruel masters in charge of this depraved pyramid scheme, the brand was literally everything

116 10 CULTS YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF

They might not have dominated the headlines, but that doesn't make these cults any less whacky

122 POP CULTURE

We might be disturbed by them, but it seems we can't get enough of cults. From TV shows to horror books and mind-bending movies, sinister sects are absolutely everywhere

© Getty Images

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW

MANY ARGUE THAT SCIENTOLOGY IS A RELIGION. OTHERS DAMN IT AS A DANGEROUS BRAINWASHING CULT. HERE WE TAKE A CLOSER LOOK INTO THE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL AND PUBLICISED RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT OF OUR TIME

WORDS **B. FLOWERS**

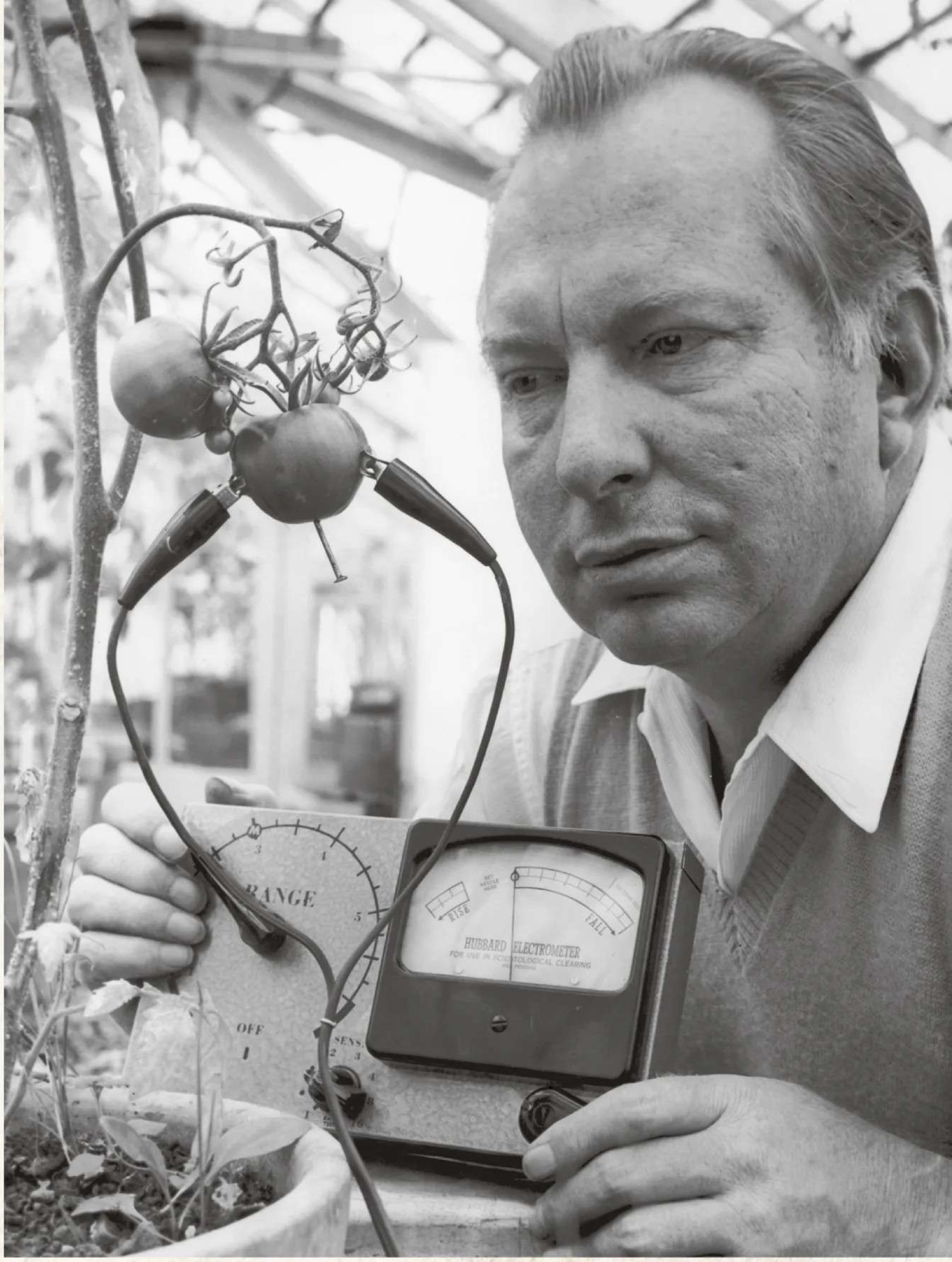
© Getty Images

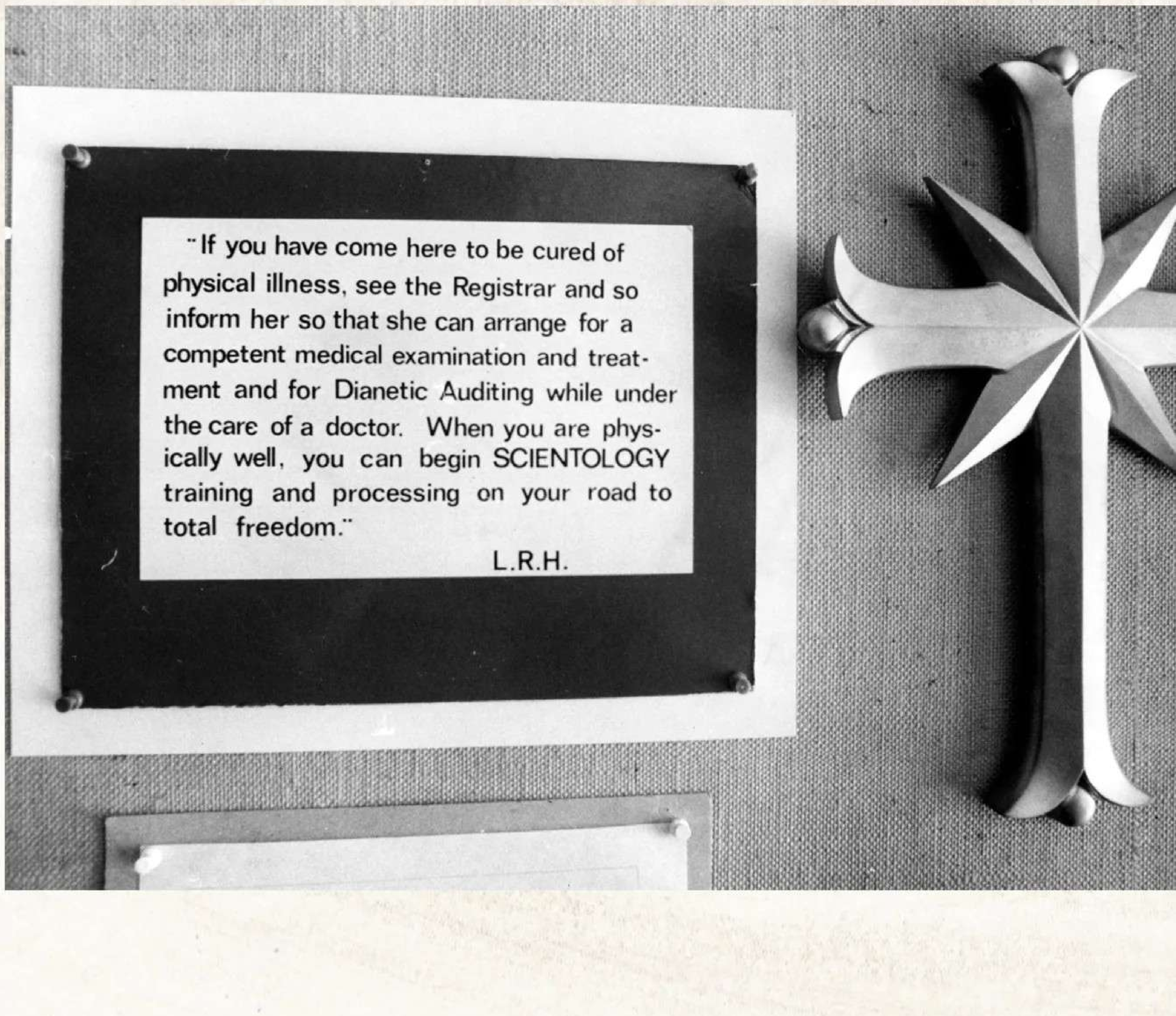
We have all heard something about the Church of Scientology, be its members' unique religious beliefs or the numerous scandals surrounding its founder and current leader. Curiosity has probably led us to binge watch numerous documentaries on the subject, making us all armchair experts on the faith and its followers. They are the church with the big blue building in Clearwater, Florida, with the host of celebrity endorsers, and with their global presence you may even have been approached to take one of their many "life-affirming" courses. Yet despite boasting churches and centres all across the world, many in capital cities, the church remains unpopular in some countries, which view it more as a business than a religion. Some go so far as to label it a potentially dangerous cult. With well-documented lawsuits involving the church and its members and a slew of ex-members coming forward with accounts of torture and abuse, the number of followers is starting to dwindle. Now with greater access to the internet, technology and media, are the church's secrets about to be exposed from within? It's time we take a look at what really happens behind the impenetrable door of Scientology, what its beliefs, practices and rules are, and ask the most important question of all: who is Xenu?

What you are about to read sounds like an elaborate plot from a science fiction novel, which is interesting as the church's founder Lafayette Ronald Hubbard was a science fiction author with titles including *Final Blackout*, *Fear*, *To the Stars* and *Typewriter in the Sky*. In 1950 Hubbard changed genres slightly by publishing *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, which transformed him from a science fiction writer to the founder and leader of the Church of Scientology. These writings were not dissimilar to that of a self -help book exploring the relationship between the body and mind, and it is these teachings that the church follows to the letter and which are still used during training.

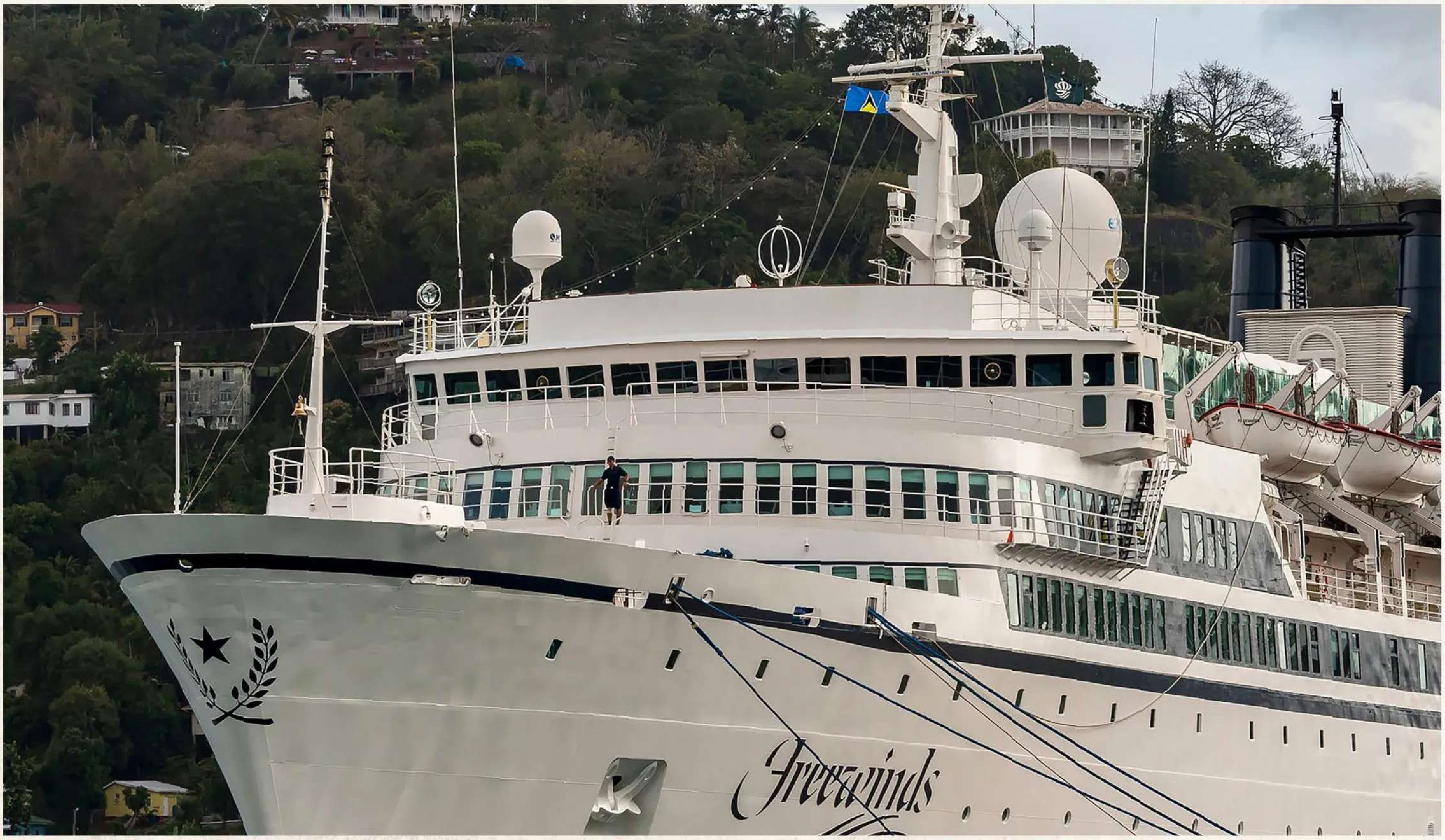
It was Hubbard's belief that the main principle of a human's existence is survival. The things that enable survival should be pleasurable and good, while negative things are detrimental to survival. Therefore a clear, analytical mind is required for making good survival decisions. Hardly the whackiest concept. However, according to Hubbard, when the mind is not functioning properly or a person has experienced a trauma, the reactive mind can take over and inflict scars (known as engrams). These are left imprinted on the mind even when the trauma has passed and the person no longer recalls the incident. Some are even left over from past lives. Hubbard believed that these engrams needed to be eliminated in order for the mind to be able to work efficiently. This led him to creating Scientology.

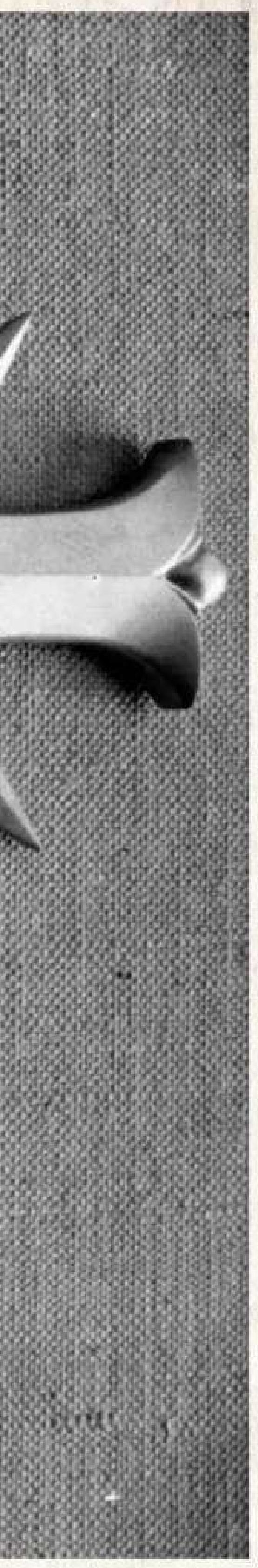
A key pillar of this movement is the belief that by pursuing self-discovery and undergoing various counselling sessions a person can improve themselves and reach their full potential. Sessions include 'auditing', where the individual is asked a series of questions by an auditor that are designed to cleanse the mind of engrams in order for the analytical mind to regain control. This process is conducted using an E-meter (electropsychometer), a device for measuring the strength of electrical currents present in the body, similar in many ways to a lie-detector machine. These readings allow for the identification of engrams based on the person's emotional state when answering questions. Classes are structured in order to help relieve a person of past traumatic or painful events. The goal is to empower them to free themselves by




"If you have come here to be cured of physical illness, see the Registrar and so inform her so that she can arrange for a competent medical examination and treatment and for Dianetic Auditing while under the care of a doctor. When you are physically well, you can begin SCIENTOLOGY training and processing on your road to total freedom."

L.R.H.





ABOVE RIGHT The Freewinds docked in quarantine at the Pointe Seraphine terminal in Castries, Saint Lucia. It is used as a training centre for the highest-operating thetans in Scientology

ABOVE LEFT L. Ron Hubbard, founder of the Church of Scientology, experimenting on tomatoes with his electrometer (E-meter)

LEFT The immortal words of Hubbard hang inside the Church of Scientology in Boston, U.S.

discarding these burdens. To be fair, so far this all sounds pretty reasonable, albeit unique. But that's until we travel to a galaxy far, far away, where we will learn of Xenu and the Galactic Federation.

Xenu is by far the most fascinating part of Scientology's beliefs, although members are not told about him until they reach the higher levels of the church. This is for their own protection, as they might not be mentally prepared for the information. According to Hubbard's texts, Xenu is a galactic overlord who ruled the Galactic Federation over 75 million years ago. This federation consisted of 76 planets that were 20 million years old and seriously overpopulated. Xenu's solution was to kill these people, freeze their souls and move them to the planet Earth to be dropped into volcanoes, thus destroying them in ginormous nuclear explosions. Eventually the other members of the Galactic Federation rebelled, fighting Xenu for many years before capturing and imprisoning him on a barren desert planet where he still lives today.

This would be movie gold, but Hubbard believed humans to be immortal souls that he called 'thetans'. Over many lifetimes these thetans became trapped in numerous bodies on many planets including Earth. Stripped of the memories of who they once were along with all of their creative abilities, the only way to return them to their true selves is through their human host submitting to auditing.

Once a new inductee has taken all the classes on offer it is believed the thetan within will be able to reclaim their true form and unlock all the parts of their life that were previously repressed in the human form. This process is also said to bring people closer to the Supreme Being. This almighty power is not the same as a traditional god (it is up to the individual member to reach their own conclusions about God) and members are encouraged to focus more on their own spiritual essence and abilities. Once the mind has been purged of engrams the thetan becomes 'clear'. This means reaching a higher level of both moral and ethical standards. Thetans that are clear can also ascend to the higher levels in the organisation and become 'OTs' (Operating Thetans), making them a key asset to all eight of the churches dynamics (main tenets): Self, Creativity, Group Survival, Species, Life Forms, Physical Universe, Spiritual Dynamic and Infinity. Study materials and courses are available for all members of the church, but they are not cheap and are often revised, meaning courses need be redone and reading materials purchased again and again in order to have the most up-to-date copies. In addition, the further you travel in your courses the more expensive they become.

Progressing through the courses is known as 'climbing The Bridge' (to total freedom). Thankfully for members struggling to ascend the bridge they don't have to complete it all in this lifetime; the end can be reached next time around. Considering that reaching the end is said to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, this does feel like a pay-as-you-go faith that could cost you this and your next life's savings. Hubbard repeatedly claimed that, "Only the truth will set you free", yet it is said that his whole life was fictionalised for his own

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"TO JOIN THE SEA ORG IS THE SENSIBLE THING TO DO."

> **“ EACH MEMBER SIGNS A BILLION-YEAR CONTRACT, COMMITTING THEM TO THE CHURCH FOR THIS LIFE AND ALL THOSE THAT FOLLOW ”**

financial gain. Defectors of the church have revealed that once they had completed all the courses more courses became available, meaning they never quite reached their goal, citing the courses to indeed be a money-making enterprise.

A LIFE OF SERVITUDE

In 1967, Hubbard founded the Sea Org (Sea Organization). Composed of the church's most dedicated members, its mission was to undertake “an exploration into both time and space”. This voluntary and fraternal order requires members to dedicate their lives to serving the church, with its followers acting as administrators and goodwill representatives. Each member signs a billion-year contract, committing them to the church for not only this lifetime but all of those that follow. Decked out in naval uniform, members are expected to carry out any job assigned to them, which often means they are transferred from one branch of the church to another and sometimes even abroad. In lieu of pay they receive board, lodgings, free training and auditing. However, if they leave the organisation they are issued a ‘freeloader's bill' and have to pay everything back.

Originally members lived on board ships named Athena, Diana and Apollo (the flagship) and were responsible for the ecclesiastical development of the church and delivering the upper levels of training and auditing. Work camps were also set up by the Sea Org with the intention to rehabilitate members deemed to have violated policies. Rules were strict and punishments severe, with members of the Sea Org even discouraged from starting families as it might act

David Miscavige, the leader of the Church of Scientology, is alleged to have gone to ground to evade a federal lawsuit

DIANETICS
SELF ANALYSIS
advertised on T.V.
700

as a distraction from their work and mission. Accusations of coercing pregnant women to have abortions have been reported by women who have left the church. Allegedly, if an abortion was refused the woman would be forced to do physical labour, intimidated and left in isolation until she acquiesced and agreed to end the pregnancy.

For his part, Hubbard, known as the "Commodore", also lived aboard the Apollo, not to work, of course, but to evade the mounting investigations against him stretching across several countries. He frequently went into hiding due to legal actions against the church and a variety of other controversies levelled against him and his practises. Hubbard was no fool; he had networks in place to assist him in these situations, which is where we are introduced to another branch of the organisation: the Office of Special Affairs (OSA).

The legal and public relations arm of the church, the OSA is known for silencing critics and forcibly disconnecting families, activities that are neither religious nor charitable. Do other religions have departments devoted to going after those who have escaped the organisation, or even members of law enforcement? Even the IRS is not immune.

ABOVE Police raid the Scientology office in Toronto

ABOVE LEFT Sea Org members live communally and have all of their needs and expenses provided for by the church in return for their voluntary service

For 25 years the IRS had pointedly refused to acknowledge Scientology as a religion and thereby grant it tax-exempt status. Never ones to shy away from a fight, and owing the IRS approximately $1 billion in unpaid taxes, the church waged a relentless legal struggle against the U.S. tax authorities. The OSA coordinated a plan to harass the IRS relentlessly, filing numerous lawsuits against them and hiring private investigators to dig into the lives of IRS staff. In October 1993, after a quarter of a century of campaigning, the church was finally granted the status it had always longed for in return for settling its debts at a cost of $12.5 million (instead of $1 billion) and laying down its legal weapons. "The war is over," declared a triumphant David Miscavige. The decision stunned tax experts and not only saved the church vast sums at the time but has enabled it to accrue a property portfolio worth an estimated $1.5 billion since.

The church had proven itself to be a formidable adversary, one willing to apply sustained pressure and, despite its protests to the latter, various methods of harassment and intimidation in order to achieve its goals. However, as previously mentioned, this wasn't the first time the church

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had tussled with the authorities. In 1978, Hubbard's wife Mary Sue and ten other members of the group were indicted on charges of domestic espionage. As part of a campaign the church titled "Operation Snow White", operatives were planted inside the offices of 136 government agencies, including the FBI, American Medical Association and Scientology's nemesis, the IRS. The church also targeted foreign embassies. Through a web of over 5,000 covert agents operating in 30 countries the church managed to copy or steal thousands of important documents that could, if needed, be used against the U.S. Government in future. There were also reports of the church using intimidation and 'fair gaming'.

Fair gaming is the process of punishing and harassing by any means necessary a person who has left or spoken out against the church. After journalist Paulette Cooper published a book criticising the church titled *The Scandal of Scientology* in 1971 she immediately became a target for fair gaming. The church formulated "Operation Freakout", a determined effort to drive Cooper to suicide or have her sent to prison. It was only when the FBI was looking into "Operation Snow White" that they uncovered this evil mission. Thankfully the church was unsuccessful, with Cooper accepting compensation from them in an out-of-court settlement in the mid-80s. Many, though, have not been so fortunate.

Another book that enraged the church was *Bare-Faced Messiah: The True Story of L. Ron Hubbard* by British writer Russell Miller. A comprehensive biography of Hubbard, it revealed his bizarre sexual exploits and penchant for exaggeration, particularly around his wartime experiences. It duly caused uproar among Scientology's ranks, with the church attempting to take out various injunctions in a bid to prevent it from being published, resulting in legal battles in the U.S. Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal of England and Wales, and the Federal Court of Canada. The book was ultimately published in 1987 in both the UK and Canada, but the church was successful in keeping it under wraps in the U.S. until 2014, when it was finally printed albeit with a new introduction by Miller, who throughout his legal battles with the church was repeatedly followed, threatened, spied on and, along with many of his associates, forced to cope with relentless efforts to dig into his past.

The following year a number of ex-members were interviewed for the documentary *Going Clear*, which was based on the Pulitzer prize-winning book of the same name. The stories of exploitation and abuse highlighted were truly shocking and in many cases absolutely heartbreaking. The church retaliated by launching an international campaign trying to block the release of the film, which again prompts the question, what are they trying to hide?

HEIR TO THE THRONE

Hubbard left his earthly body in 1986 and, in accordance with the beliefs he founded, travelled to Venus before being redirected to his ultimate spiritual destination. It fell to his protégé David Miscavige to solemnly deliver the news to the church's followers before presenting himself as its new leader. As a teenager Miscavige was a deputy to Hubbard and steered the church through its war with the IRS in the 1990s. Within a year he had fully taken control of the church, leading the regime with an iron fist. He knew all the politics of the organisation, making him the ideal candidate to step into the role of leader under the official title of Chairman of the Board of the Religious Technology Center, a further branch of the church responsible for controlling the copyrights and trademarks for both Dianetics and Scientology. Yet despite his lofty position and unwavering commitment to the cause, ironically it was the church's refusal to acknowledge the disappearance of Miscavige's wife, Michele Diane "Shelly" Miscavige, that would lead to one of Scientology's most famous faces leaving the movement.

THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

By early 1986 David Miscavige stood as the uncontested supreme leader of the Church of Scientology, having ruthlessly swept aside any obstacles to his ascent. The cocooned world of the church was his domain, and yet the outside world held very different views of the church in the wake of its various legal problems. It needed something, someone to help to give it an air of legitimacy. A poster boy, recognised the world over, who could make the church seem more personable and improve its overall image. Enter movie star Tom Cruise.

Introduced to the church by his first wife Mimi Rogers in 1986, Cruise, the star of the blockbuster *Top Gun*, was the ideal candidate. He soon became Miscavige's number-one priority, with dedicated teams of scientologists taking care of his every need, from cleaning his house to finding him a new girlfriend following his 1990 divorce from Rogers. But the church didn't intend on just recruiting one megastar. Celebrity Centers were soon introduced, a further branch of the church focused on recruiting and promoting their stars, including *Grease* actor John Travolta, who'd converted to the cause way back in 1975. These buildings contrasted greatly to the buildings provided for the rest of the flock. Lavish ceremonies were thrown to show the world that Scientology was serious, a force for good, a force not to be reckoned with. In turn, the draw of the church for writers, producers and lesser celebrities in particular was not just spiritual; it also offered major networking opportunities. However, not every famous follower was an unquestioning disciple.

It was while attending the November 2006 wedding of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes that Leah Remini, star of hit shows including *The King of Queens*, noticed a rather glaring absence. Mrs Miscavige was nowhere to be seen. She innocently asked "where is Shelly?", only to have her concerns dismissed. Convinced that something was amiss, Remini began to question the church and was promptly punished for her supposed insubordination. After spending 34 years inside the church, she finally managed to escape in 2013. She wasted little time in filing a missing persons report for Shelly, which was then promptly closed by the LAPD, who assured her that Shelly had been found safe and well. However, at the time of writing, Shelly is yet to make a public appearance since she was apparently last seen in 2007.

Since her departure from the church Remini has worked alongside another former member to expose the truth behind Scientology and help members who wish to leave find their freedom. Her partner in this noble endeavour is Mike Rinder, arguably the highest-ranking scientologist to have turned his back on the church.

Rinder previously worked as the executive director of the Office of Special Affairs. In this capacity he was the church's main spokesman. He was also charged with handling any legal issues and overseeing internal investigations, closely

APPLIED
SCHOLASTICS
SPANISH LAKE

INSET Tom Cruise attends the grand opening of Applied Scholastics International's new headquarters in St.Louis, Missouri, 26 July 2003

monitoring the conduct of the church's followers. "Part of my job was to discredit and destroy critics who spoke out against the church," said Rinder. "If the church believed that someone was an enemy and needed to be silenced or destroyed, it was my job and I did it."

Rinder's eyes were finally opened during an exchange with BBC journalist Jon Sweeney, who Rinder confronted in London while Sweeney was filming a documentary titled *Scientology and Me*, after spending two years imprisoned in 'The Hole', a building at the church's international base near Hemet, California, for having somehow displeased Miscavige. Along with other supposedly disgraced church executives, Rinder was kept under 24-hour supervision and handed punishments including cleaning out the sewage retention pit. Taunting and violence were commonplace, and employees were even forced to jump into a swimming pool fully clothed regardless of the temperature or time of year in order to "commit their sins to the deep". They had no access to the outside world and many had been given no explanation of what crime they had committed to earn them a place there.

One day Rinder was unexpectedly removed and sent to the UK in a bid to discredit Sweeney and, if possible, prevent his BBC documentary from airing. When he failed to do so Miscavige ordered him to present himself at the church's grounds in Sussex and "dig ditches" as punishment before returning to the U.S. Before doing so Rinder was forced to deny allegations made by Sweeney that Miscavige had physically attacked Rinder and other church members. This was to be the moment that Rinder began to see how warped the situation had become, a situation that was forcing him to deny the truth to both the world but more importantly himself. Instead of following Miscavige's orders he fled the church, a courageous decision that bought him his freedom but cost him his children, who are still devout believers.

His work to date alongside and independently of Remini has gone a long way to exposing the church's malevolent methods and helping many people to escape it. The Scientology and the Aftermath docuseries earned the paid an Emmy and a TCA Award. Podcasts followed with a number of fascinating guests, including none other than Ron Miscavige, the father of David, who ironically learned about the church's operations on an iPad gifted to him by his son that hadn't had its Wi-Fi disconnected. It was a window to the outside word, one that led to his own escape. Rinder and Remini have also published their own memoirs, respectively titled *A Billion Years* and *Troublemaker: Surviving Hollywood and Scientology*, and continue to raise awareness.

VIDEO NASTIES

In 2018 the church launched its own television network and streaming service airing original films and series on their practices and beliefs. Scientology Network even has a tagline for its television channel that it also shares on its social media channels: "The only thing more interesting than what you've heard is what you haven't." They could easily be referencing the continued controversy surrounding the church.

Unfortunately none of the shows feature Xenu, but there are many other Scientology-related documentaries and series on other streaming channels that offer a different insight, including the astounding *My Scientology Movie* by documentary maker Louis Theroux. In this eye-opening production Theroux touches on the church's underhand

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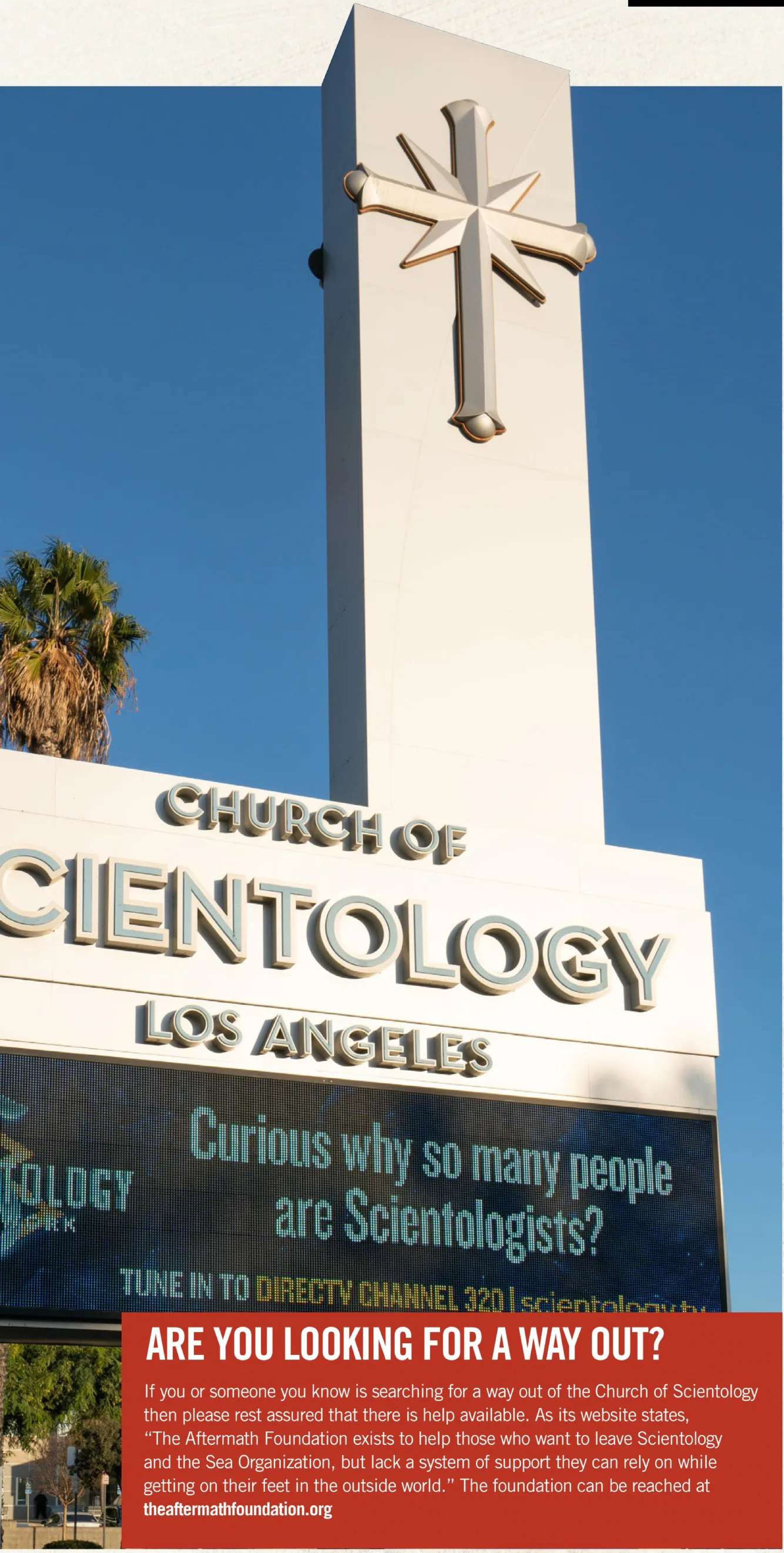
GOING CLEAR
SCIENTOLOGY AND THE
PRISON OF BELIEF
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ALEX GIBNEY

ABOVE Writer and director Alex Gibney arrives at the Film Independent Screening of HBO Documentary Film's *Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief*

RIGHT Mike Rinder and Leah Remini attend a screening of *Scientology and the Aftermath*, 17 May 2018

> “ THERE HAVE BEEN STORIES OF KIDNAP, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EVEN MURDER ”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silencing tactics, such as 'dead agenting', whereby false information and rumours are spread about anyone who dares attack the church. This can involve members rifling through a critic's rubbish in order to find material that they can use to silence or blackmail them. Videotaping auditing sessions in order to blackmail members speaking out or trying to leave was also reported to be common practice. And then there is the treatment of disaffected Scientologists who are brave enough to leave. Not only are they labelled 'suppressive persons' (SPs) but they are also constantly hounded and their family and other Scientologists are forced to disconnect from them entirely. Homes are often picketed by plaque-wielding church members, or alternatively camera crews are hired to stalk former believers. Combined with devastating smear campaigns, the church's methods can leave the intended target penniless and thereby forced to return to the church or disappear for good. Many of those who have left the church still wish to practise the teachings of Hubbard, but doing so without the church's permission means further problems and the label 'squirrel', which is akin 'heretic'.

There are strict written guidelines on how to silence dissenters and members are trained to ignore the media. Add to this the fact that most have no access to the internet or interaction with the outside world and it's easy to see how a cohort of fanatics willing to destroy so-called heathens can be mustered and deployed. Reports of witness intimidation still continue despite such exposure by the likes of Theroux and others, and there have also been stories of kidnap, trafficking and even murder. The FBI has been investigating the Sea Org since 2009 in the wake of allegations of human trafficking at their Gold Base in California. Following numerous deaths there has also been scrutiny over Narconon, the church's drug treatment programme, which was not only said to be medically unsafe but lacking in trained medical personnel in some of its locations. These scandals alone make you question the church's integrity.

In conclusion one must ask if this movement is a strange but ultimately well-meaning faith or a well-oiled business willing to crush any opponents in its relentless drive for fresh recruits and further income. Are they who they say they are, or have they become entirely removed from the beliefs and teachings of Hubbard? Has the church's series of run-ins with medical professionals due to its views of psychiatry being a tool of repression and belief that all drugs are poisons which inhibit spiritual freedom deterred new followers? Possibly it's down to numerous protests in countries like Germany, which refuses to grant the church any official religious status and calls for the release of family members allegedly indoctrinated by its practices. Or maybe it's because the church has remained in the media spotlight thanks to recent allegations of physical and mental abuse by top ex-officials and the ongoing rape trial of *That '70s Show* actor Danny Masterson. Is the mask finally slipping? With the tireless efforts of journalists such as Tony Ortega, whose website The Underground Bunker has provided daily updates on the church and its activities since 2012, it remains to be seen how Scientology can ever hope to recover.

Whenever it is asked for comment, the church has always responded that they are the ones being persecuted, that information about them has been distorted and their religion is genuine. With its membership dwindling and survivors continuing to testify to the contrary, it has few other options.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT?

If you or someone you know is searching for a way out of the Church of Scientology then please rest assured that there is help available. As its website states, "The Aftermath Foundation exists to help those who want to leave Scientology and the Sea Organization, but lack a system of support they can rely on while getting on their feet in the outside world." The foundation can be reached at **theaftermathfoundation.org**

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THE WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH

WORDS **ALICE PATTILLO**

DUBBED "AMERICA'S MOST HATED FAMILY" BY JOURNALIST LOUIS THEROUX, PASTOR FRED PHELPS HAS LEFT A LEGACY OF LOATHING WITH HIS HIGHLY PUBLICISED PICKETING, HOMOPHOBIC HATE GROUP

As with most cults, its existence is heavily tied up with its founder and leader, but in the case of Westboro Baptist Church (WBC) this happens to be the family patriarch too. Westboro is unique in that the majority of its members are blood-related direct descendants of Fred Waldron Phelps, Sr., making the prospect of leaving (prior to his death) a rather difficult ordeal. While Westboro has achieved worldwide notoriety thanks to media coverage of their picket lines, the cult exists entirely within Topeka, Kansas, where a whole block is home to the church itself, the extended Phelps family and the handful of non-Phelps' who have chosen to become members of Westboro, of which there were roughly 70 members as of 2016.

THE INFAMOUS MR PHELPS

Born in Meridian, Mississippi, in 1929 to a railroad policeman and a homemaker, Fred Phelps – known as "Gramps" to family members – was raised a Methodist. His mother died of cancer in 1935 and his father remarried a divorcee (something Phelps would later voice issue with). A highly intelligent child, graduating high school at 16 among the top achievers in his class, Phelps was also an Eagle Scout – the top rank achievable in the Boy Scouts of America. But rather than continuing his education, he felt he had a "higher calling" to serve God.

In 1947 Phelps was ordained as a Southern Baptist Minister at age 17, rejecting his father's Methodist faith and an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point (which his father had worked hard to obtain for him) to move to Cleveland, Tennessee, and attend evangelical college. Reportedly, he never spoke to his family again.

After a year, Phelps dropped out of the evangelical college, moved to Pasadena, California, and enrolled in community college. He appeared in an issue of *Time* magazine in 1951, when he was lecturing other students about campus "sins" such as promiscuity and "lusts of the flesh", profanity and "evil language", cheating and "filthy jokes". He was ordered to stop thanks to a California law that forbade the teaching of religion in public school campuses but continued his sermons from across the street.

WESTBORO'S BEGINNINGS

In 1952, Phelps married Margie Marie Simms, and they soon welcomed their first child. In 1954, Phelps, a pregnant Margie and their infant son relocated to Topeka, Kansas, when East Side Baptist Church hired Phelps as an associate pastor. The church, founded in 1931, chose Phelps to head up their new location on the west side, but upon the establishment of Westboro Baptist Church, Phelps broke ties with the East Side and became independent and unaffiliated with any other Baptist denomination.

With his new-found soapbox from which to preach his extreme views, Phelps quickly lost most of his congregation, who rejoined East Side or other nearby churches, leaving only a small group of parishioners remaining, most of whom were his own family and close friends. But this didn't deter Phelps, who went on to initiate what would become a world-famous dynasty of prejudice and hatred.

With a belief that any form of contraception at all is useless and rejecting God's will, Margie and Phelps spawned 13 children, leading to 54 grandchildren – offering up Phelps a

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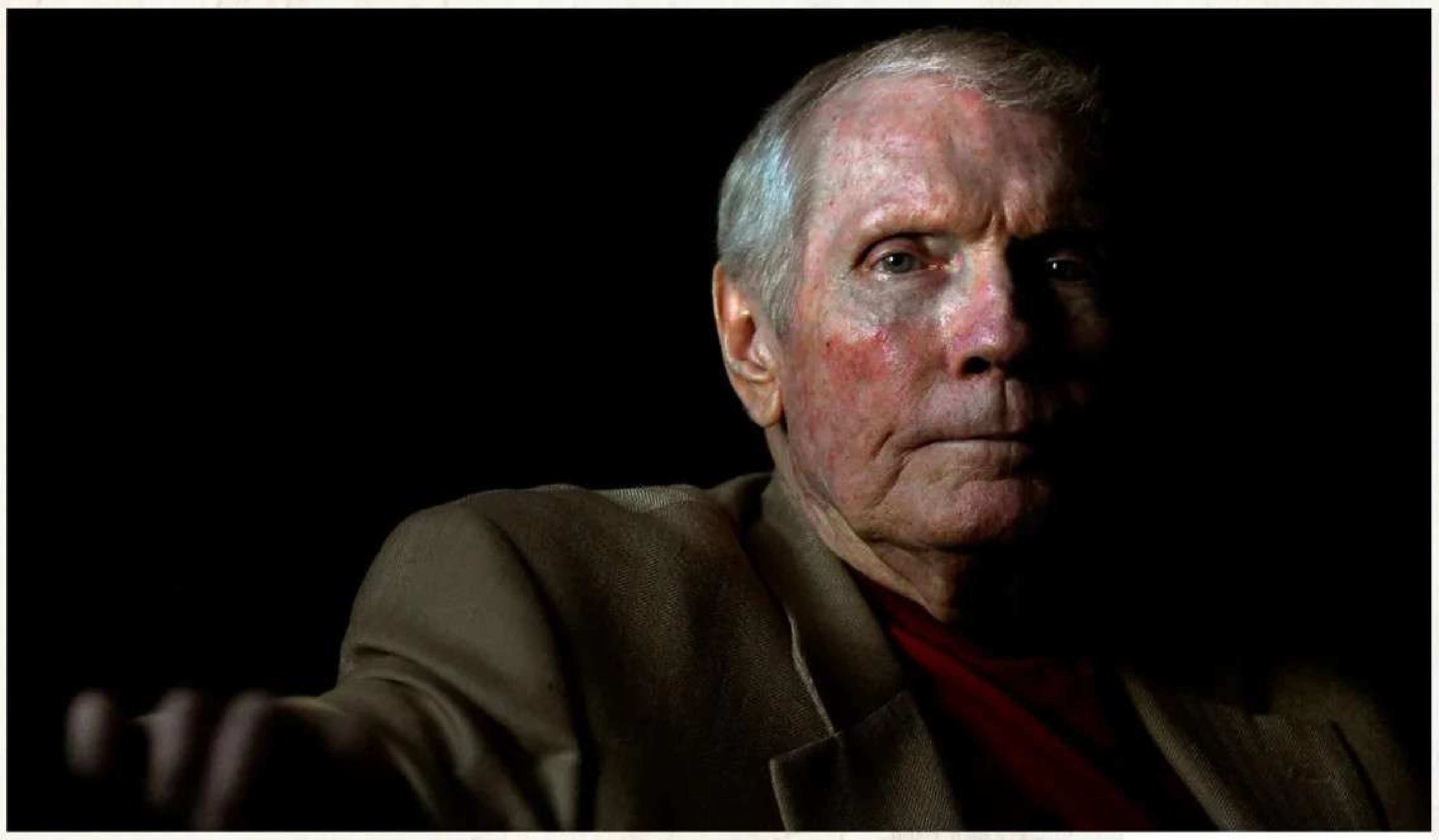

ABOVE The late Fred Phelps, the fiery hate-filled father of the Westboro Baptist Church

RIGHT Shirley Phelps-Roper with her daughter, Megan, who left the WBC in 2014

rather sizable number of minds to mould. Their son Nathan, who left his family in 1980 and is now an LGBTQ+ activist and outspoken critic of his deceased father and Westboro Baptist Church, has claimed that Phelps was an abusive father. Nate alleges that his father would beat him, his siblings and their mother with a leather strap and the handle of a mattock. Nate's brother Mark and sister Dorotha have corroborated and supported his claims. All of Phelps and Margie's children were brought up within the church and presented with their father's opinions as if they were fact. In turn they believed him to be a prophet.

THE FAMILY BUSINESS

In 1964, Phelps earned a degree in law, enabling him to found his own law firm and work in civil rights. In 1969 he was suspended from practising as a lawyer due to misconduct, but by the 1970s he had surprisingly gained praise from many African-American leaders, making a name for himself as an advocate for Black civil rights. Phelps' most notable cases involved him acting on behalf of African American clients, in particular a case in 1973, when he helped to uphold the 1954 supreme court ruling Brown vs. Board of Education, ending racial segregation in the U.S. public school system, fighting for the rights of a young African-American girl in 1973 who had received an inferior education based on discrimination. He has claimed that he "systematically brought down the Jim Crow laws of [Topeka, Kansas]" and his daughter, Shirley Phelps-Roper, recalls locals "shooting our cars out" and "screaming we were nigger-lovers".

Despite working on behalf of many Black clients, according to his son Nate, Phelps allegedly expressed racist views and often used racial slurs and berated them behind their backs, although Phelps' daughter Shirley denies her brother's claims. He demanded that all of his brood attend law school, "the family business", and work at his firm, which he would later use to sue numerous communities at the stick-end of Westboro's abusive tirades.

In 1979 Phelps was permanently barred from practising law in Kansas but continued in federal courts until 1989, when a complaint led to him being disbarred permanently and two of his children being suspended for six months.

WESTBORO'S BELIEFS

Westboro Baptist Church actively and aggressively voice political hate speech, which they claim their faith justifies, although his biblical citations were obscure at best and his doctrine was full of contradictions. The beliefs of the Westboro Baptist Church are, essentially, Phelp's own beliefs, which the church's followers view as the teachings of the only true prophet.

Although Westboro Baptist Church was officially an independent Baptist church when Phelps broke ties with East Side, Phelps' doctrine included the scriptural literalism common to Primitive Baptist belief. He also follows the Primitive Baptist style of worship and church discipline and sees his church as separatist and establishment. Phelps described himself as an old school baptist, but he and his congregation were rejected and condemned by both Old School and Primitive Baptists. As such, Westboro remains an unaffiliated Baptist church.

Phelps was supportive of Calvinism, believing that humanity is bondaged to sin. He preached that only a predetermined number of people will be selected for redemption on Judgement Day, and they were selected before the world was even created. Christ died for the sins of the elect alone and we are all predestined to either be saved or eternally damned.

The Westboro Baptist Church subscribes to all of Phelps' beliefs, adhering to five-point Calvinism, with the acronym TULIP (Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, Perseverance of the saints) displayed at the front of the church. First and foremost, they believe that everything is the will of God. Any tragedy, such as illness or untimely death, is seen as due to a person's inherent sin, and the church rejoices in it as part of God's plan. Those who they perceive to live morally are likely the elect, and while they believe they cannot save those who are doomed for hell, they feel it is their duty to preach to people to spread God's word and encourage obedience.

The church instils a fear of God in its members, encouraging them to rejoice in all the world's death and destruction as acts of his will. Breast cancer, for example, is referred to as a "God smack". The man dictates the home life and is in charge of the family and his wife. Human feelings, including grief, pain, joy and love, are not respected, and mental illness is seen as evidence of something evil or demonic. WBC is outwardly and perhaps most notably homophobic, but they have also voiced transphobic, anti-Semitic, racist, anti-Christian, anti-American, Islamophobic and misogynistic views. Nathan has said that WBC functioned in order for his father to "vent his rage and anger" and the church is characterised as a hate group by both the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League.

Some of their most abhorrent claims are that the LGBTQ+ community are responsible for the AIDS epidemic and the 9/11 terrorist attacks and "deserve the death penalty", that Barack Obama is the Antichrist ("the Beast spoken of in the Revelation," according to Shirley) and "Jews are the real Nazis".

"GOD HATES FAGS"

Westboro Baptist Church is perhaps best – or worst – known for its protest activities, largely in the form of picketing at funerals and high-profile events, which garner them worldwide attention. It's a communal affair, with children roped in, placed right on the firing line, armed with signs featuring hateful slogans, including their infamous vulgar tagline "God Hates Fags".

AMERICA'S MOST HATED

Westboro was documented in three BBC films by British journalist Louis Theroux, who stayed with the family and reported on their controversial doctrine, offensive picketing and cult-like lifestyle through a series of interviews and observations with church members, including Phelps, his daughter Shirley Phelps-Roper and her daughter Megan Phelps-Roper, who left the church in 2012. The films – *The Most Hated Family in America*, *America's Most Hated Family* and *Surviving America's Most Hated Family* – were broadcast in 2007, 2011 and 2019 respectively, with the final film shot after Phelps' death in 2014 and chronicling Shirley's fall from grace and Megan's escape. According to *Surviving America's Most Hated Family*, Phelps had been voted out of the church before his death. It is also claimed that he called out to the rainbow-coloured equality house located across the road from the Phelps' block, saying they were "good people". It's thought he may have been suffering with dementia or a similar degenerative disease at the time, but the church will not comment on his potential change of heart.

Westboro began picketing in 1991 in Gage Park, reportedly in reaction to it being a known location where homosexuals would congregate for sex. After allegedly witnessing two men attempting to "lure" his grandchild into the woods in the park, Phelps wrote and complained to city officials. But after seeing no change regarding the situation, Phelps decided to take matters into his own hands. However, rather than a peaceful protest against public indecency, Phelps' message, according to his granddaughter Megan Phelps-Roper, "went far beyond calls for the cleanup of Gage Park" and attacked the gay community as a whole. The church picketed the park with slogans including "Expose Gay-AIDS Ploy" and what would become the WBC's slogan: "God Hates Fags".

In 1998, WBC protested the funeral of Matthew Shepard, a twenty-one-year-old gay university student who was brutally murdered allegedly on account of his sexuality. The killing had shocked the nation and WBC's grotesque decision to protest at the poor man's funeral received coverage on the news channel CNN, bringing the group to national attention.

Westboro continues to picket at memorial services and the funerals of soldiers killed in Iraq, murdered members of the military and leaders of other religions. They picketed the funeral of Dr. George Tiller in 2009, who had been murdered by anti-abortion extremist Scott Roeder, with banners reading "Baby Killer In Hell", "Abortion Is Bloody Murder" and "God Sent The Shooter"; as well as the heavy metal vocalist Ronnie James Dio, who they deemed a Satan worshipper, among numerous others. They also threatened to picket the funerals of the victims of the Sandy Hook school shootings and the Boston Marathon bombings but were deterred by threats from the hacktivist group Anonymous.

Their use of picketing at events such as soldier's funerals rubs salt in the wounds of their targets. If their hurtful beliefs and words aren't enough, this callous action makes it almost impossible for them to be ignored. Their protests have attracted counter-demonstrators, from "angels" appearing to block them out to bikers revving their engines to drown out Westboro's lurid songs.

Reportedly, Westboro spends in excess of $200,000 (£160,000) on travel expenses, purely to fly all over the country and picket funerals. They raise money through lawsuits, often filed against the targets of their hatred through the Phelps Chartered Law Firm. On top of this, members are expected to give ten per cent of their earnings to the church.

Understandably, offended parties often react to WBC with anger and outrage. These reactions only fuel WBC further, and the elder members use it as evidence of those outside of the church being sinful in order to further indoctrinate younger members. As Louis Theroux observed, "Pickets are an opportunity for Westboro to spread its hateful message and also to indoctrinate its own membership. For them, the outrage they provoke is a sign that they are doing God's work."

THE FUTURE OF WBC

Since the death of Phelps, the future of WBC has looked rocky. Other than Phelps, the most prominent spokesperson for the group was Phelps' daughter Shirley Phelps-Roper, who often addressed the press at pickets, explaining why they were protesting. She appeared on all three of Theroux's documentaries. Theroux's earliest film showed how she took the reins from her ailing father when it came to picketing and organising the WBC, becoming the second most significant figure within the church for several decades. However, by Theroux's third documentary in 2019 her power and authority had dramatically declined. After the death of her father and the departure of two of her daughters and one of her sons, Shirley appeared vulnerable and she was seemingly overthrown as de facto leader by an all-male board of "elders", which included Steve Drain, a former liberal filmmaker who converted to the church and has taken up a significant role in the way the church is run. Drain enforced his misogynistic viewpoint upon the church, casting women out of the higher leadership roles. As of 2020, he and his family have been excommunicated and are no longer part of the church.

The church has "grown" and "matured" in the past decade, with its leaders turning away from the dramatically hyperbolic and aggressive, fiery sermons of Phelps.

Since 2004, over 20 of WBC members have abandoned the church and their family, including Libby Phelps Alvarez, Shirley's daughter Megan Phelps-Roper, and Lauren Drain, daughter of Steve Drain. All three have published books documenting their experiences with the church. With its membership largely dependent on children being born into the church, and only the occasional outsider joining, the future of WBC looks bleak.

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NXIVM

THE CULT INSIDE A CULT

CELEBRITIES, SLAVES AND HUMAN BRANDING: INSIDE THE SELF-HELP GROUP TURNED SECRET SEX CULT

WORDS **CHRISTOPHER EVANS**

The smell of burning flesh. Agonising pain. A woman is held down as a cauterising pen sears a symbol into the sensitive skin on her pelvis. She twists and spasms as her nerves are burnt through. The other women in the room sob and hold each other.

Invited to a bonding session, this barbaric scene was not what any of them had envisioned. They had been told they would be getting a tiny tattoo, an opportunity to explore sisterhood and connect with each other on a deeper level.

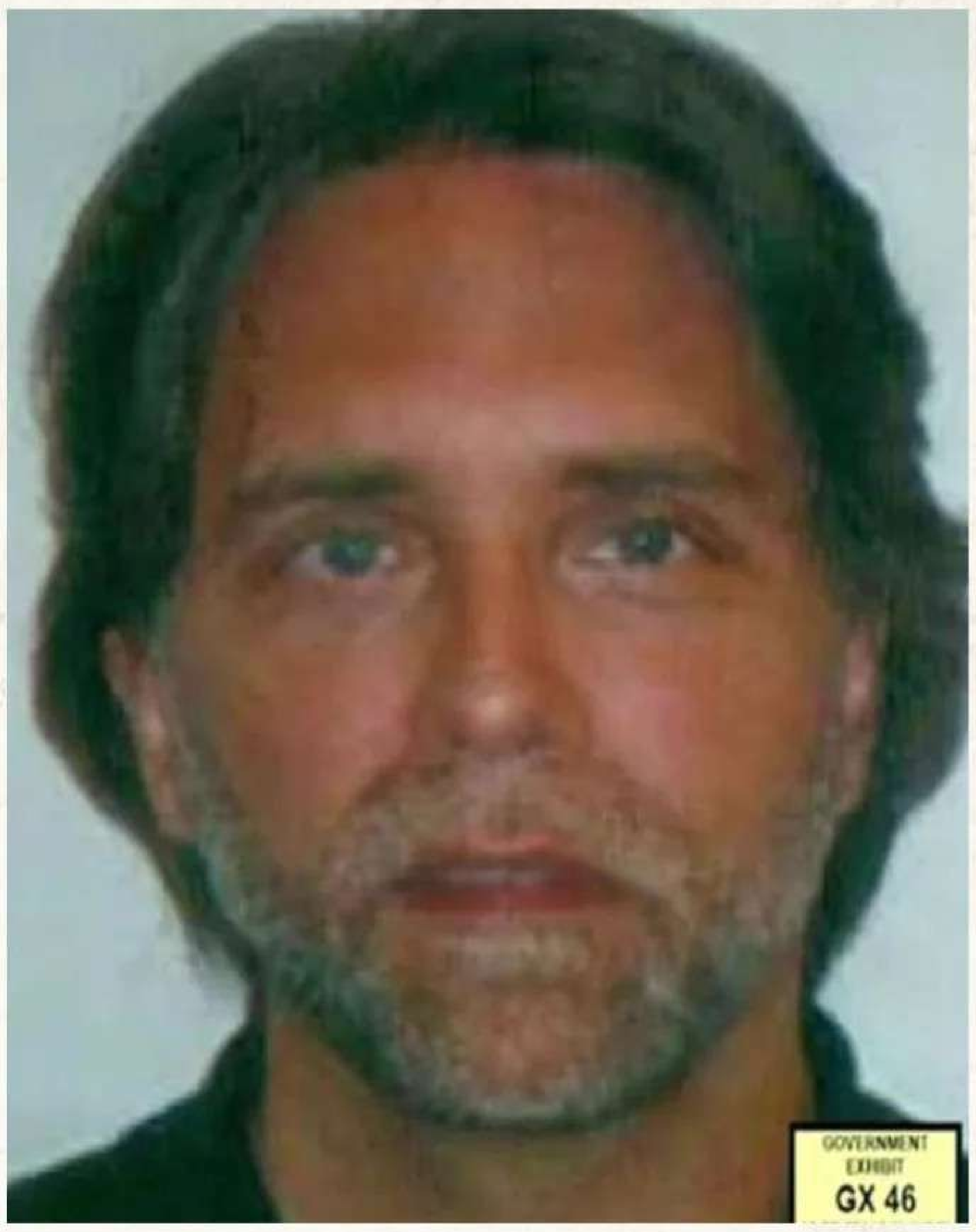
Instead, they were stripped naked and branded like cattle. Burned onto their bodies would be a grotesquely large "Latin symbol" that they were told represented the elements. Its real meaning, when finally revealed, would be yet another dark and disturbing twist in the story of the sex cult that has rocked Hollywood to its core.

Founded in 1998 in New York City by Keith Raniere (right) and Nancy Salzman, NXIVM (pronounced "Nek-see-um") started as a self-help organisation that promised to unlock a person's full potential.

Keith Raniere was born in 1960 in Brooklyn to an advertising executive and a dancing instructor. When he was seven an intelligence test told him that he was gifted and talented. These results went dramatically to his head. According to his father, from this moment Raniere developed a God complex, believing he was superior to everybody else.

After graduating college and working in computer programming and then at a company called Amway, Raniere started Consumers Buyline, a multi-level-marketing programme that promised members discounts on a wide range of household goods for a monthly fee and on the condition that they recruited more people to sign up.

During this time, at the age of 24, Raniere allegedly seduced and began to sexually abuse a 15-year-old girl, Gina Hutchinson. When Gina's sister confronted Raniere after catching him sneaking out of her bedroom window, he explained that Gina was a Buddhist goddess, whose soul was much older than her body, and that she was destined to be with him.



Gina dropped out of school to work at Consumers Buyline. Her family assumed they would marry but Raniere refused. Although Gina tried to break away many times, she was always urged to return by Raniere and members of his inner circle. They remained friends on and off for several years, until 2002 when she took her own life, shooting herself in the head in a Buddhist monastery in Woodstock. Her motive remains unknown to this day.

While Raniere claimed his business was making a billion dollars a year, in 1994 it was accused of being a pyramid scheme. Raniere was ordered to shut the company down and pay back $40,000 (approximately £32,000), but he only returned $9,000 (£7,000) and, unsurprisingly, would not admit to any wrongdoing.

455
KARNER
WOODS
NXIVM
Executive
Success
Programs

Image source: Getty

Shortly after, in 1997, Raniere met Nancy Salzman, a former nurse and therapist. The pair would bond over a shared interest in hypnosis and neuro-linguistic programming, a pseudoscience that believes in altering behaviours by examining speech patterns and language.

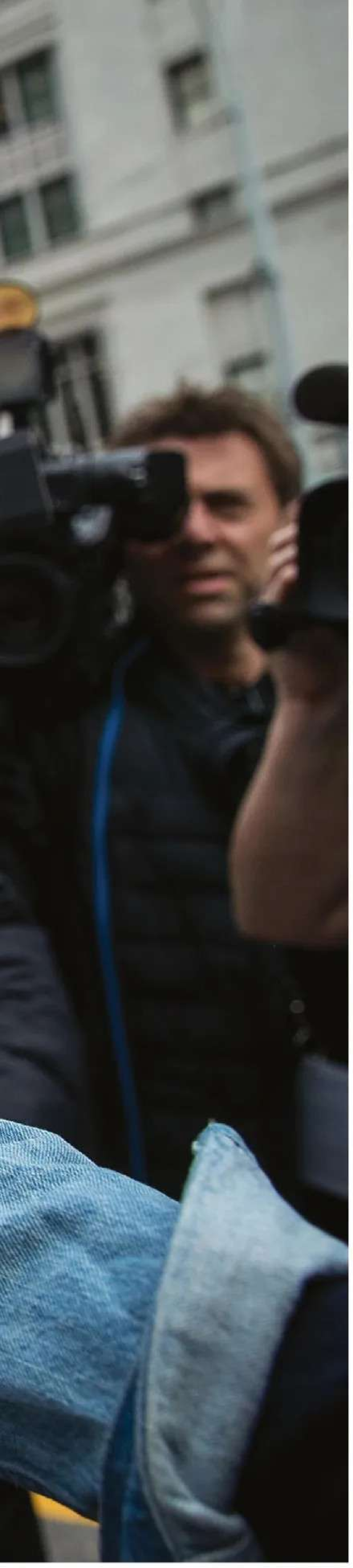
Salzman became enamoured with Raniere, who she viewed as a spiritual advisor. Together they developed the "Executive Success Programs", or ESP, motivational workshops that promised to teach people how to become rich, powerful and successful.

The programme was sold using Raniere's image as a brilliant, all-knowing guru. Word spread of this intellectual giant who claimed to have one of the highest IQs in the world, could speak full sentences at one years old, had mastered college math by 13 and was a top athlete who won national judo tournaments. None of this, of course, was verifiable, but it helped to cultivate the legend of a mastermind who was always inventing incredible new sciences, patented by the U.S. Government no less, that could offer those willing to believe life-changing opportunities.

ABOVE Actress Allison Mack leaves court during a bail hearing in New York, April 2018. She was released on bail for $5 million (£4 million) but later sentenced to three years for racketeering

RIGHT A glimpse inside NXIVM's HQ. The cult owned a wealth of properties

FAR RIGHT Co-founder of NXIVM, Nancy Salzman



> “MEMBERS WERE TAUGHT ABOUT ‘SUPPRESSIVES’, PEOPLE WHO WERE INHERENTLY EVIL AND WANTED TO TEAR DOWN THE GOOD OF THE WORLD”

In reality, Raniere and Salzman were applying for patents for all sorts of vague ‘technologies’. Many would not get granted, but the numerous pending patents were enough for the delusional Raniere to convince people of his genius.

Soon rebranded as NXIVM (the trademark patent for the name claimed it meant ‘the next millennium’), it quickly took off, selling Raniere’s jargon-filled brand of coaching to millionaires and wannabe entrepreneurs.

They managed to snare several high-profile personalities, including well-known actresses, the son of the Mexican President, and the Bronfman sisters, heiresses to the multi-billion dollar Seagram Liquor company. The pair became devout followers of Raniere as well as his closest confidantes, providing him with funds and an air of legitimacy.

Recruits to NXIVM referred to Raniere as “Vanguard”, a name he chose for himself from an old arcade game in which players would hoard power by destroying other players. Salzman, as Raniere’s first student, was known as “Prefect”.

Members would remove their shoes, perform special handshakes and wear different coloured scarfs depending on their rank (and how much money they put in). They would stand when higher-ranking individuals entered the room and frequently thanked a giant portrait of Raniere.

NXIVM’s students were taught that their own self-interests were their main priority, and people who needed help were “parasites” to be avoided at all costs. Any failures and negative behaviours that were holding them back were the result of faulty thoughts and programming.

This could be fixed, of course, by taking hours and hours of NXIVM’s courses, a long and intensive process of sharing their deepest, darkest secrets over gruelling 13-hour sessions that cost thousands of dollars. Courses ranged from $2,000 to $7,500 (£1,600 to £6,000) and students would find that after completing one it would be necessary to purchase the next. Members could earn commission by recruiting more people and earn discounts on their own courses, harkening back to Raniere’s origins in multi-level-marketing.

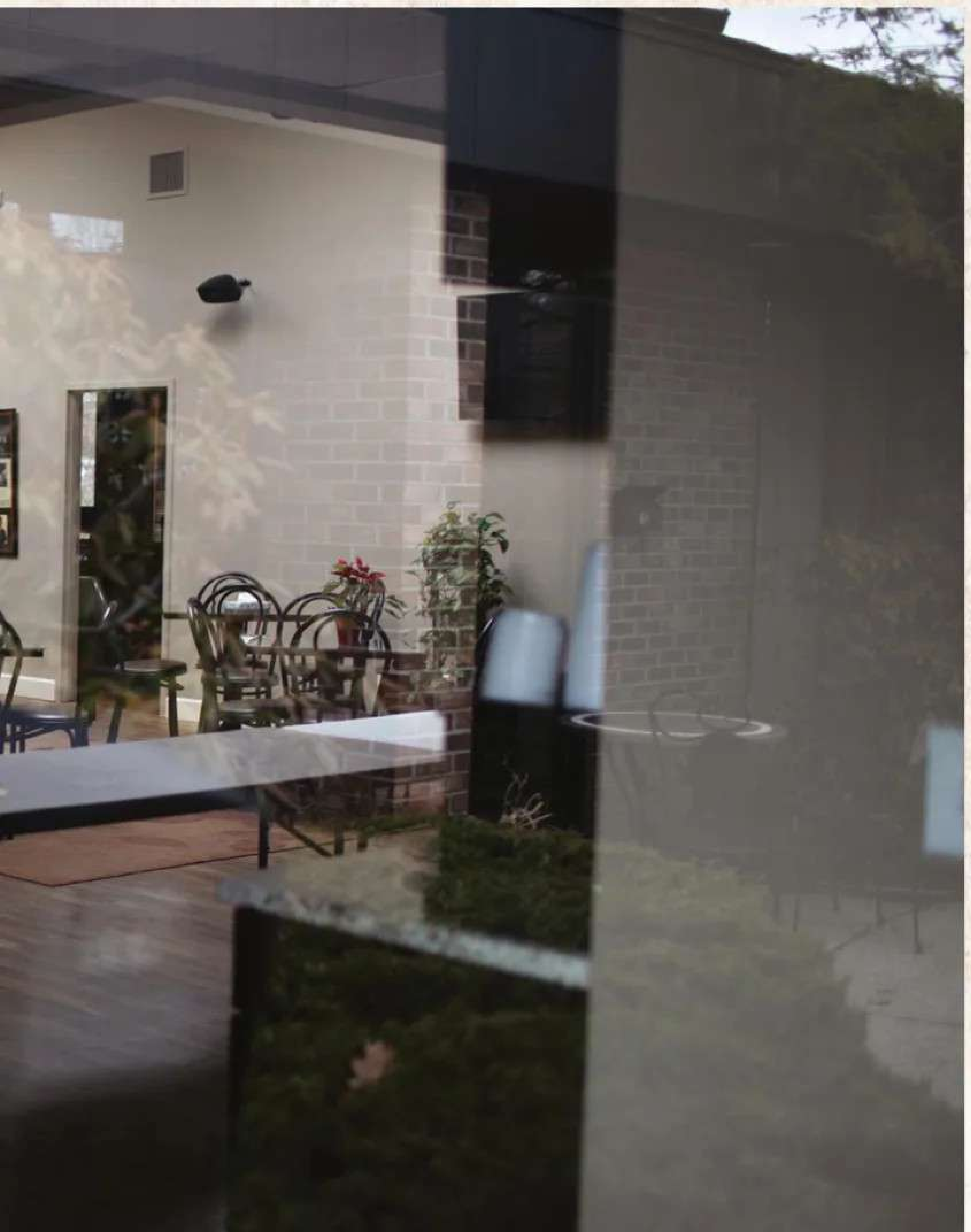
If they ever felt uncomfortable with any of the course’s contents or hesitant about the high price tag on the next level of enlightenment, members were told this was proof of their faulty programming at work and why they required more lessons. They were taught about ‘suppressives’, people who were inherently evil and wanted to tear down the good of the world. Anybody who became disillusioned with the group’s teachings would be accused of suppressive behaviour.

Over time, members were taught to override their own intuition and instincts and rely only on what the group was telling them. While they thought their minds were being ‘re-programmed’ for success, in reality they were brainwashed.

The group’s techniques were, at the time, a closely guarded secret. Members were forced to sign a legally binding contract stating they would not discuss any of NXIVM’s activities. Secrecy was one of the 12 ‘mission statements’ that were repeated during each session, along with pledging to control as much of the world’s money, wealth and resources as they could. They also, in what would be a grim foreshadowing, swore never to be a victim as “there are no ultimate victims”.

By the mid-2000s rumbling concerns about its practices raised suspicions that NXIVM was more than just a self-help group for the wealthy. Forbes published an exposé that alleged that Raniere was running a cult-like programme designed to psychologically break down its members. Edgar Bronfman, Sr., was quoted as saying he thought his daughters were involved with a cult after learning they were bankrolling it.

In response to these claims Raniere managed to secure a visit from the Dalai Lama, who allegedly received a $1,000,000 (£800,000) fee to speak at the NXIVM headquarters, a claim his holiness denied. Meanwhile, in



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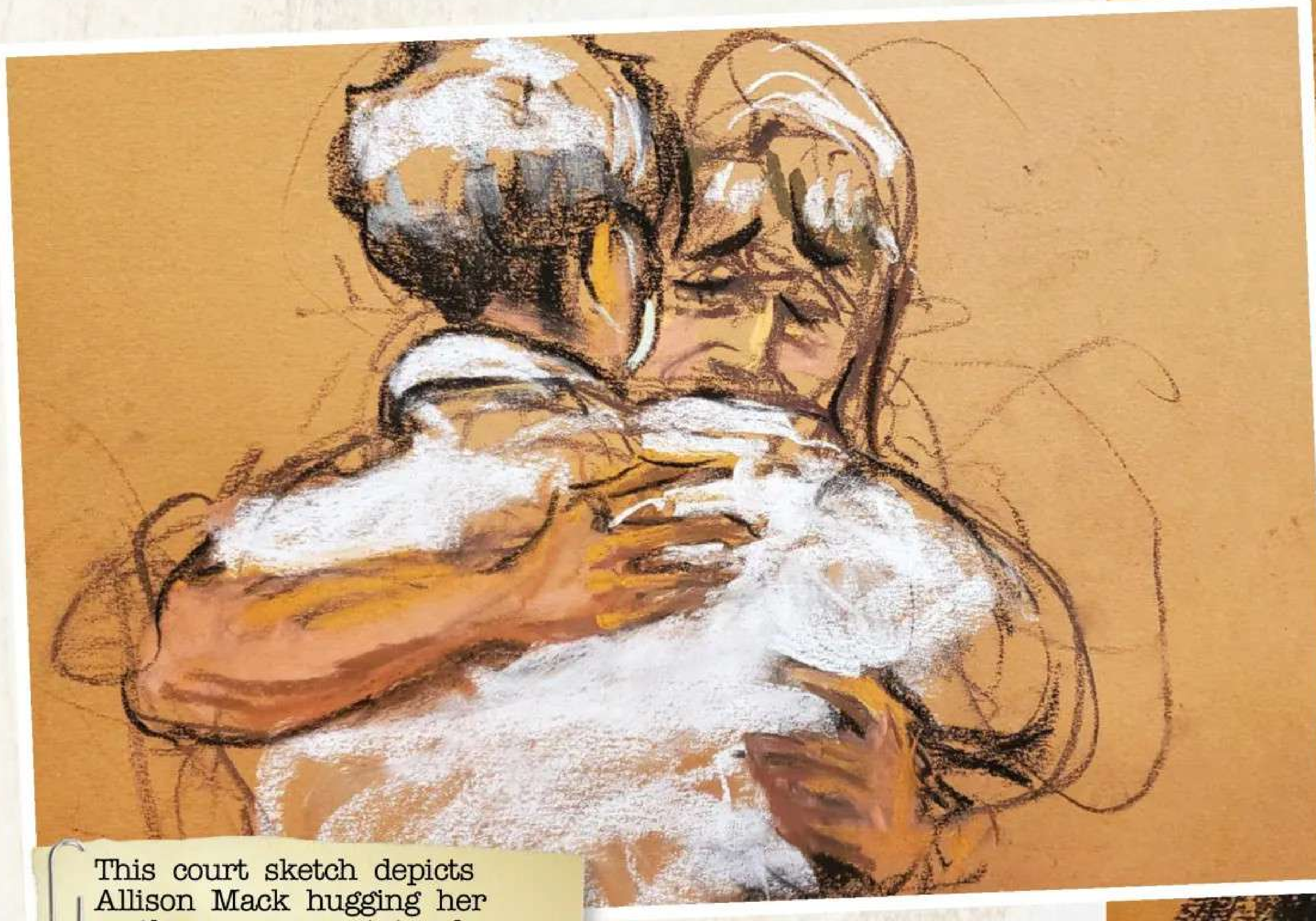
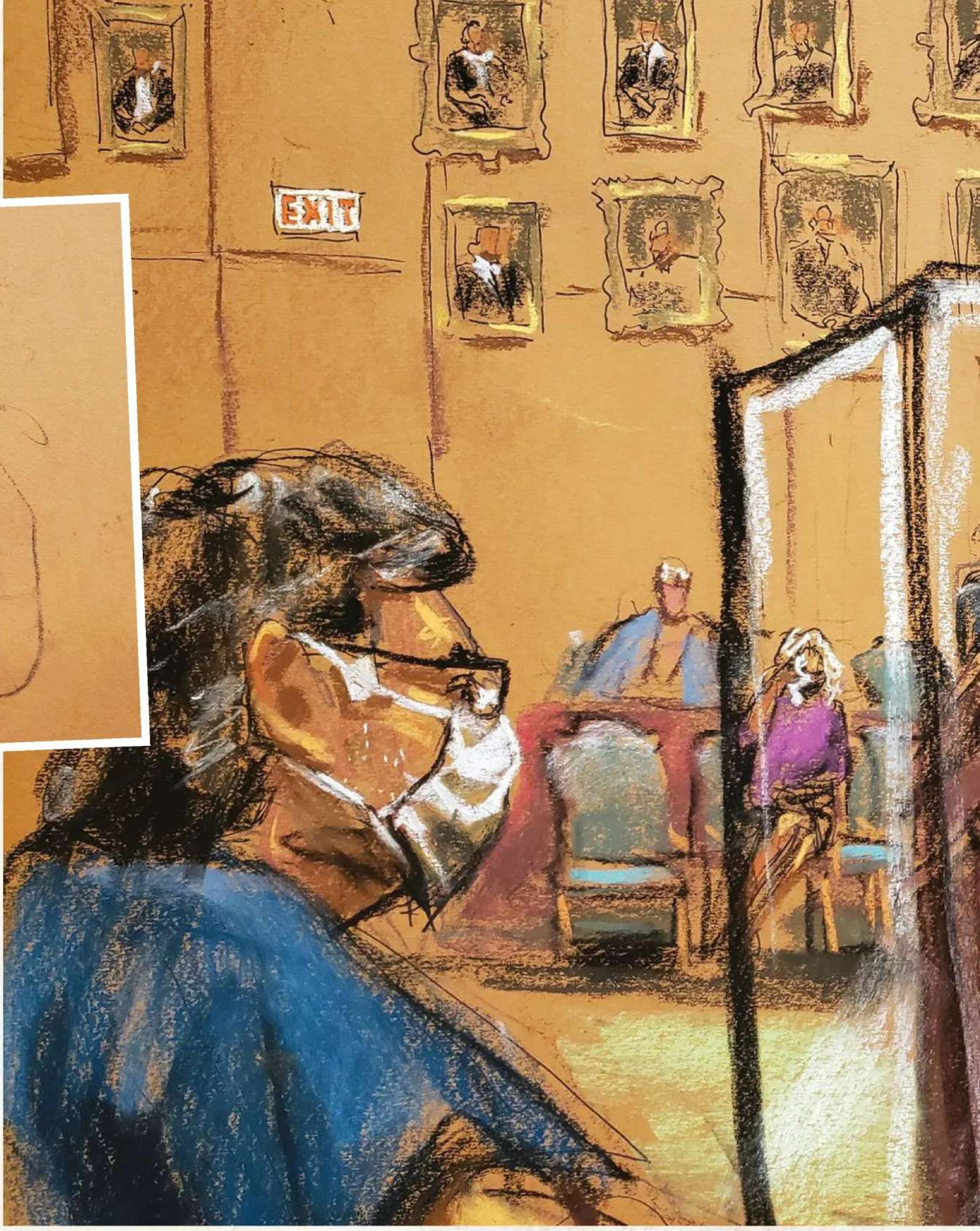


This court sketch depicts Allison Mack hugging her mother upon receiving her three-year jail sentence



the background, the Bronfman sisters used their wealth and connections to attempt to intimidate critics, hiring up to 60 lawyers to bring cases against them. Despite these allegations, the true underbelly of NXIVM was still to be revealed.

Raniere created a secret off-shoot group called DOS in 2015, its name an acronym for Dominus Obsequious Sororium, Latin for 'master over the slave women'. At first he recruited eight women from his closest circle, including Salzman's daughter, Lauren, and *Smallville* actress Allison Mack, who became his 'slaves'. They would recruit more slaves, themselves becoming 'masters', and this pyramid continued each time a new woman joined, becoming the slave of all of the masters above her. Members were promised an opportunity of a lifetime and a sense of empowerment from joining the all-women group, with many having no idea at first that Raniere was involved, sitting at the top as the 'grandmaster'.

On joining DOS, members would hand over 'collateral', material that could harm them or their families if made public. These were usually nude photos or sex tapes. Mack wrote a letter claiming her father had molested her, and reportedly encouraged another member to do the same.

Slaves were ordered to keep their pubic hair natural and to stay as thin as possible, reporting their weight to Raniere

Image source: Alamy

on FOX
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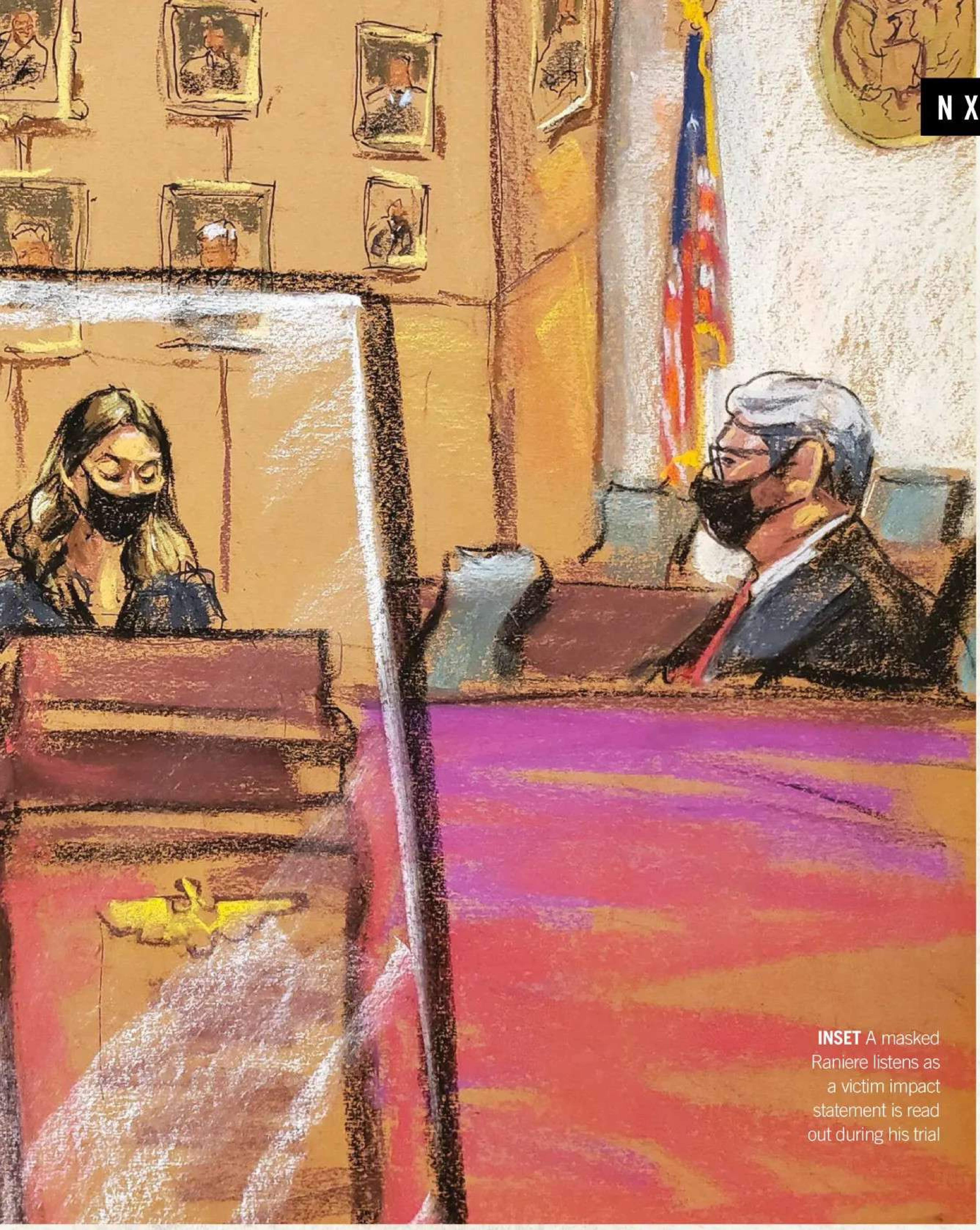
INSET The cast of Smallville attend the 2002 Teen Choice Awards (Mack is in the red T-shirt and Kreuk is beside her)

LEFT Catherine Oxenberg discusses her daughter India's time in NXIVM in the documentary *Seduced: Inside the NXIVM Cult*



INSET A masked Raniere listens as a victim impact statement is read out during his trial

> “WOMEN WOULD BE TOLD TO UNDRESS AND THEN HELD DOWN AS THE SYMBOL WAS SEARED INTO THEIR SKIN”

by text each day. If he wasn’t happy, he would let them know. “You need to eat less, the extra weight hurts my heart,” he told one member.

Tasks were dished out to slaves by their masters, such as running errands or cleaning their homes. Much of the ‘work’ would result in being required to have sex with Raniere. Refusal was punished with cruel demands, such as being forced to stand in unnatural poses for hours or barefoot in the snow. They would be threatened with their collateral being released, which could potentially ruin their lives. And then came the branding.

Women would be invited to Mack’s house, where they would be told to undress and then held down as the ‘Latin symbol’ was seared into their skin. To their horror they soon discovered that it was no Latin symbol and it did not represent the elements. Viewed at another angle, the symbol spelled out the letters ‘KR’. Keith Raniere had branded them with his own initials.

In 2017, the *New York Times* published an article which revealed the existence of DOS and its horrific practices to the world. Raniere and his closest allies fled to Mexico as the FBI issued a warrant for his arrest. He was captured a year later hiding in a luxury villa by Mexican police, and in October 2020 Raniere was sentenced to 120 years for sex trafficking, racketeering and possession of child pornography.

As Raniere’s abhorrent treatment of women came to light, so did some disturbing allegations about how some of his former lovers died. Alongside Gina Hutchinson’s suicide, Kristin Snyder vanished after last being seen acting oddly during a NXIVM session. She had reportedly claimed to be carrying Raniere’s child and her body has never been found. Barbara Jeske and Pamela Cafritz, both girlfriends who lived with Raniere, died of cancer.

As part of a television documentary on these suspicious deaths, a woman who claimed to have also lived with Raniere and had suffered from cancer had a hair sample tested. The results allegedly showed traces of poison. Is it possible that Raniere poisoned these women? We will likely never know, but the certainly documentary makes some very compelling arguments against Raniere.

Members of the cult’s inner circle were also arrested for their involvement in its criminal activity, with Salzman, Mack and Clare Bronfman all receiving jail time.

Some remain loyal to their ‘Vanguard’, insistent that the criminal case was a smear campaign by the evil forces of the world and that the women were more than happy to enslave themselves. However, plenty more former members came out publicly about the abuse they had suffered and witnessed, and many bravely testified at his trial. Together they exposed NXIVM and its callous leadership to the glare of the public spotlight and helped to condemn Raniere to spend the rest of his natural life behind bars.

© Getty Images

NXIVM’S FAMOUS FACES

HOW TINSELTOWN BECAME ENTANGLED IN THE DARK WORLD OF SEX SLAVES

After NXIVM was exposed, one of the more notorious revelations was how many celebrities it had in its ranks. Deploying the same method as the Church of Scientology, NXIVM would tirelessly pursue and recruit celebrities into its fold, purely for the wealth and legitimacy they brought along with them. Unlike the rest of the grunts, celebrities were often given special privileges in the hopes that they could entice more of their famous friends.

Nancy Salzman’s daughter played an active part in luring some of NXIVM’s high-profile Hollywood members. Through her friendship with Kristin Kreuk she managed to recruit in Allison Mack, both famous faces for their parts in TV’s teen hit *Smallville*. Although Kreuk eventually left, Mack stayed on and dedicated herself to the cult. She grew close to Raniere, begging him to “make her a great actress again”, and she was an integral part of its secret sex-slave group DOS, claiming it was her idea to brand the women with a cauterising pen rather than a tattoo.

Other celebrities linked to the cult included cast members from *Star Wars*, *Battlestar Galactica* and *Dynasty*. Jennifer Aniston and Gerard Butler reportedly enrolled on an introductory course but went no further, and Shirley MacLaine also attended some workshops.

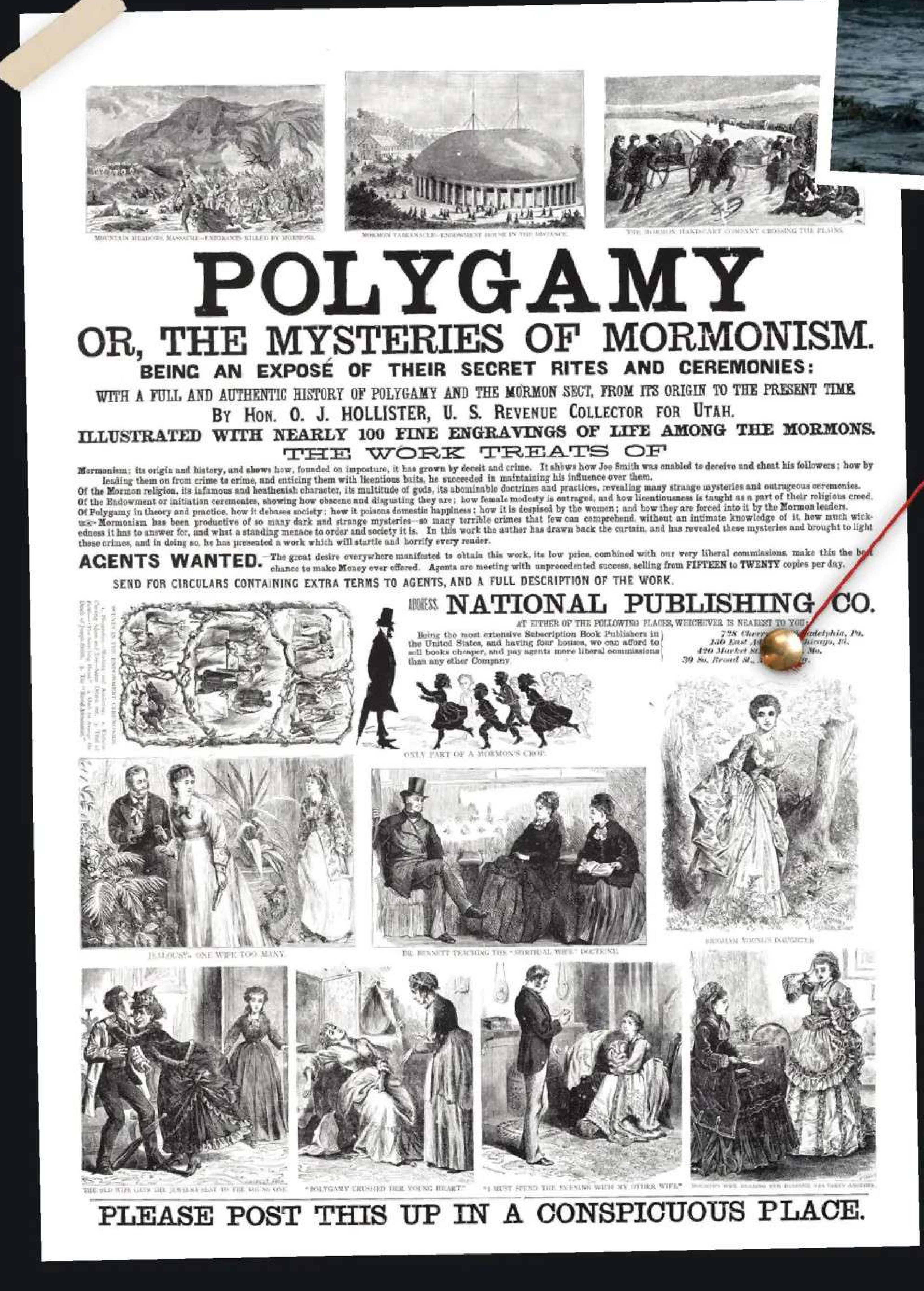
10 CRAZY CULTS YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF

WORDS **BEE GINGER**

In an age where news updates are 24/7 we have all become used to hearing about various 'organisations', their scandals and lawsuits played out on television, social media and made into documentaries to entertain us at the click of a button. From a psychological aspect cults can be fascinating, and with over 8 billion people on the planet you wonder how many cults exist. Do you know anyone who has been in one, or still is? The more we hear the more gripped we become. We would of course all like to think that we would never be taken in and are immune to manipulation, coercive control and mind games, but some cults are not so obvious – they don't have a big blue building in Florida or a dedicated celebrity centre with famous advocates. These lesser-known cults slip under the radar, making them all the more mysterious, and although some may only come across as a little bit bizarre and obsessive, there are others whose rituals and beliefs are downright sinister. From murder to mass marriage and coconut worship to feet diagnosis, we take a look at ten of the most crazy cults you've probably never heard of.

LOVE HAS WON

Known to her devout followers as "Mother God", Amy Carlson thought herself to be the reincarnation not only of Marilyn Monroe and Joan of Arc but of Jesus Christ himself. She also claimed to be queen of the mystical ancient city of Lemuria and secret daughter of Donald Trump, professing to communicate with spirits and angels and declaring that she could cure cancer. Many followers believed her to be over 19 billion years old and to have birthed all of creation. Her mission was to lead her 144,000 followers into the awakened '5D' plane of existence; those who didn't follow would be destroyed, with their energies taken and recycled into the Sun. Amy was expected to leave the broken 3D world behind by ascending in a starship. However, in April 2021 her mummified remains were discovered in a home in Moffat, Colorado, where she was wrapped in a sleeping bag, decorated with Christmas lights and propped on top of a bed, her eyeless sockets adorned with glitter. Her group of followers were said to have been moving the body from California in order to continue worshipping her. Police statements showed the group was posting daily livestream videos online selling "health supplements" with the intent to recruit more followers, steal their money and brainwash them.



MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE—EMIGRANTS KILLED BY MORMONS.

MORMON TABERNACLE—ENDOWMENT HOUSE IN THE DISTANCE.

THE MORMON HAND-CART COMPANY CROSSING THE PLAINS.

POLYGAMY

OR, THE MYSTERIES OF MORMONISM.

BEING AN EXPOSÉ OF THEIR SECRET RITES AND CEREMONIES:

WITH A FULL AND AUTHENTIC HISTORY OF POLYGAMY AND THE MORMON SECT, FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY HON. O. J. HOLLISTER, U. S. REVENUE COLLECTOR FOR UTAH.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NEARLY 100 FINE ENGRAVINGS OF LIFE AMONG THE MORMONS.

THE WORK TREATS OF

Mormonism; its origin and history, and shows how, founded on imposture, it has grown by deceit and crime. It shows how Joe Smith was enabled to deceive and cheat his followers; how by leading them on from crime to crime, and enticing them with licentious baits, he succeeded in maintaining his influence over them.

Of the Mormon religion, its infamous and heathenish character, its multitude of gods, its abominable doctrines and practices, revealing many strange mysteries and outrageous ceremonies.

Of the Endowment or initiation ceremonies, showing how obscene and disgusting they are; how female modesty is outraged, and how licentiousness is taught as a part of their religious creed.

Of Polygamy in theory and practice, how it debases society; how it poisons domestic happiness; how it is despised by the women; and how they are forced into it by the Mormon leaders.

☞ Mormonism has been productive of so many dark and strange mysteries—so many terrible crimes that few can comprehend, without an intimate knowledge of it, how much wickedness it has to answer for, and what a standing menace to order and society it is. In this work the author has drawn back the curtain, and has revealed these mysteries and brought to light these crimes, and in doing so, he has presented a work which will startle and horrify every reader.

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JEALOUSY, ONE WIFE TOO MANY.

DR. BENNETT TEACHING THE "SPIRITUAL WIFE" DOCTRINE.

BRIGHAM YOUNG'S DAUGHTER.

THE OLD WIFE GETS THE JEWELRY SENT TO THE YOUNG ONE.

"POLYGAMY CRUSHED HER YOUNG HEART."

"I MUST SPEND THE EVENING WITH MY OTHER WIFE."

PLEASE POST THIS UP IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE.

THE CHURCH OF THE LAMB OF GOD

Founded by Ervil Morrell LeBaron, the Church of the Lamb of God was a violent Latter Day Saint group and an offshoot of the Mormon religion. LeBaron considered himself to be a prophet and to his flock he was the One Mighty who had been sent to Earth in order to purify the Mormon faith. He had inherited this mantle from his late father Alma Dayer LeBaron. Expelled in the 1950s by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints because he continued to practise polygamy, which had been abandoned by the church in 1890, Ervil went on to have over 50 children with his 13 wives. When he wasn't busy procreating he was organising hits: over the course of two decades it's believed he ordered the murders of dozens of people. The media named him the 'Mormon Manson', and although he rarely involved himself directly in any violence as God's representative on Earth, he instructed his followers, who believed he was getting instructions directly from God to kill anyone who challenged LeBaron or threatened to leave the cult. This included two of his own children and one of his wives.

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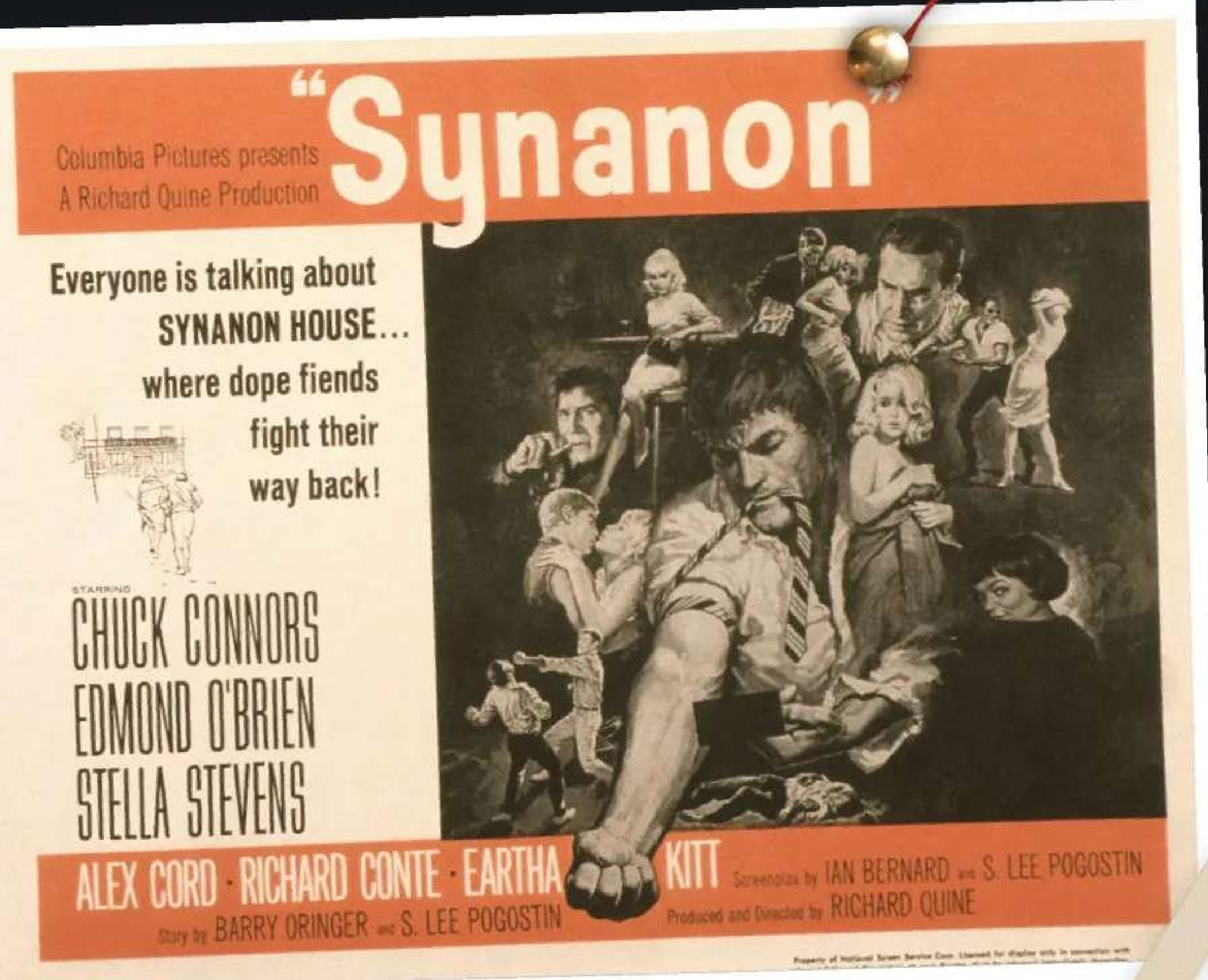
UNIVERSAL MEDICINE

Although some people claim to have their best ideas while on the throne (WC), not many claim to have an "energetic impression" while on the toilet resulting in founding a cult. However, for former tennis coach Serge Benhayon, this revelation led him to form Universal Medicine in 1999. Despite having no medical qualifications, Benhayon went on to sell courses and workshops in "esoteric healing" alongside music, products and publications. The primary treatments taught and practised included esoteric ovary and breast massage, chakra-puncture and ovarian readings. Benhayon's followers believe him to be the new messiah sent from the mythical kingdom of Shambhala to 'awaken' them. He refers to himself as the "Ascended Master" and claims to be the only person on Earth to have reached the highest level of initiation. He also professes to be the reincarnation of the artist Leonardo Da Vinci. The group has very strict rules on what members are allowed to eat and at what times they can sleep. Burping is frowned upon as it means you are releasing demons and negative energy from the body.

Benhayon has amassed millions of dollars but also a good deal of controversy. In 2018 the New South Wales Supreme Court found him to be a charlatan who engaged in "healing fraud that harms people" and who "swindles cancer patients". The jury in the trial also found Benhayon to be further exploiting followers by targeting them to leave him bequests.

> " BENHAYON'S FOLLOWERS BELIEVE HIM TO BE THE NEW MESSIAH SENT FROM THE KINGDOM OF SHAMBHALA TO 'AWAKEN' THEM "


Columbia Pictures presents
A Richard Quine Production
"Synanon"
Everyone is talking about SYNANON HOUSE... where dope fiends fight their way back!
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STELLA STEVENS
ALEX CORD · RICHARD CONTE · EARTHA KITT
Screenplay by IAN BERNARD and S. LEE POGOSTIN
Story by BARRY ORINGER and S. LEE POGOSTIN
Produced and Directed by RICHARD QUINE

SYNANON

Founded in 1958 by Charles Dederich, a recovering alcoholic, Synanon was designed to rehabilitate drug and alcohol abusers. With incarceration previously having been considered the only option for addiction, this new 'cold turkey' and 'tough love' approach was considered revolutionary. Soon thousands of juvenile delinquents and addicts were ordered by the courts to take part in the programme. This of course came at a cost, and with its popularity growing Dederich began inviting non addicts and even professionals to join. New members had to transfer all their assets to the organisation, resulting in a healthy bank balance of around $33 million £26.5 million). To avoid tax Synanon was declared a religion in 1974. Dederich's plan to create his own utopian society was under way.

Followers lived communally and took part in "truth-telling" sessions called "The Game". But as the number of besotted followers grew, so did Dederich's ego. He became psychotic, demanding his followers shave their heads and enforcing mandatory vasectomies and abortions. Any babies born into the cult were removed from their mothers to be raised in the "hatchery". Married couples were forced to split and take a new partner every three years. There was even a militant branch of the group, the Imperial Marines, whose job it was to inflict violence against opponents and take vengeance against any former members.

HAPPY SCIENCE

Despite sounding like an educational children's television programme, this cult is neither happy nor scientific. It was founded in 1986 by Ryūhō Ōkawa, a former Wall Street trader who at the age of 24 is said to have had an epiphany that not only gave him the ability to communicate with spirits but also informed him that he was in fact the incarnation of a supreme being from the planet Venus and that his new life's mission was to "spread happiness to humanity by telling the truth". Which is what Ōkawa went on to do, firstly by publishing a host of books filled with the spiritual messages he had received from no less than Confucius himself as well as other historical figures including Nichiren and Jesus Christ. These books went on to be the core textbooks of the organisation. Numerous promotional videos followed, including one that claimed the People's Republic of China and North Korea were plotting nuclear destruction against Japan. Spiritual vaccines were also sold that were said to not only prevent but also cure COVID-19 alongside CDs and DVDs of Ōkawa lecturing on coronavirus and immunity.

HAPPY SCIENCE
Living in the miraculous age With Savior—EL CANTARE
JAN 2023 | ISSUE
346
Youtube Channel
Happy Science Official
What is True Success in Life?
The 29th Laws Series
Coming Soon!
The Laws of Hell
No. 107
幸福の科学

THE MOONIES

Despite having previously been known as The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, and more widely known as the Unification Church, the name Moonies comes from founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon, who started the group in 1954 in South Korea at the age of 15. Claiming to have had a vision with instructions from Jesus Christ to finish his Earth's mission Moon began his own journey to "create a state of 'sinless' purity for humanity". With his stringent anti-communist beliefs, Moon regularly sought out relationships with powerful conservative politicians, particularly in the U.S. and Japan, and had many politicians including Donald Trump speak at his church-affiliated events. It is the church events that the organisation became well known for, particularly the mass Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremonies, which were held in large stadiums. For some couples it was like participating on *Love at First Sight* as they had not previously met. For others who were engaged or already married the ceremony symbolised the church's belief that the couple would be removed from any lineage of sinful humanity and unite into God's own sinless lineage. This would also stand for any children born into the marriage. The 'organisation', however, has long been accused of soliciting funds from brainwashed members, and many questions have been asked not only about the methods used to recruit followers but also the church's business practices.

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THE FAMILY

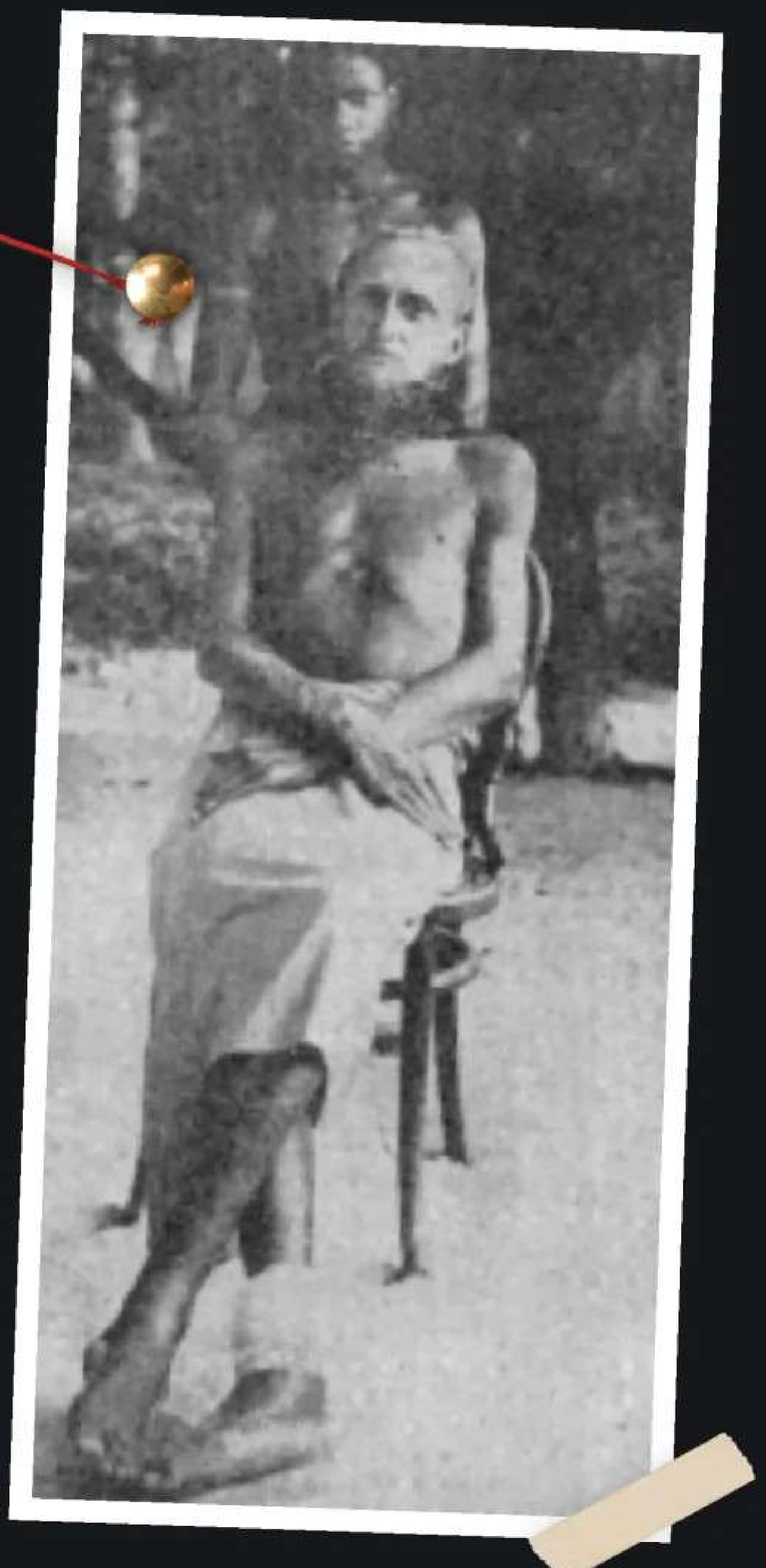
Not to be confused with the Manson Family, this Family was one of the most notorious cults in Australia, headed up by yoga teacher Anne Hamilton-Byrne. Believing herself to be Christ's reincarnation, she was one of the few female cult leaders and by far the cruellest in modern times. For almost 20 years she was able to operate secretly in the Australian countryside outside Melbourne. With the help of parapsychologist Raynor Johnson, the two collaborated to form 'the Great White Brotherhood' by 'adopting' children who were given to them as gifts by members of the group. Many legal papers were falsified by social workers, lawyers and doctors within the group, and other group members were implored to do the same. The idea was to create a master race that would survive an imminent apocalypse. Byrne declared that she was the biological mother to all of the children, telling them she was Jesus Christ and punishing them with beatings, starvation and emotional torture if they stepped out of line. She would even dose them with LSD when she saw fit. She bleached their hair platinum blonde and dressed them in identical clothing, hiding them away should anyone visit the property. In 1987 the cult's headquarters were raided and the children thankfully removed.

THE TRUE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Founded by Pyotr Kuznetsov, The True Russian Orthodox Church was a breakaway branch of the Russian Orthodox Church led by members who considered it to be insufficiently orthodox. Followers of the group believed legal documents to be satanic as they contained symbols and codes and they were not allowed to handle money or credit cards, watch television or eat any processed foods.

In November 2007 around 35 members hid themselves away in a cave in Russia's Penza Oblast. Kuznetsov had instructed them to do this and told them to await the end of the world, which he predicted would come in May 2008. He was not with the group, having been arrested by the police. The group threatened mass suicide if any authorities were to intervene. So there they remained until the March of the following year, when several members emerged after parts of the cave collapsed due to melting snow. The remaining members evacuated the cave in May of that year due to the pungent smells coming from two of the group who had perished over the harsh winter. Authorities later blew the cave up to prevent anyone returning. After realising his prediction was wrong and trying to take his own life, Kuznetsov was admitted to hospital, where he spent time in a psychiatric clinic. A diagnosed schizophrenic, it's rumoured that he sleeps in a coffin.

THE FATHER, SUN AND THE HOLY COCONUT



Setting sail from Germany in 1902 with little more than a suitcase filled with books, August Engelhardt embarked on a mission to create a new Edenic order by moving to a tropical island, embracing nudity, leaving behind all his possessions and living on a diet of coconuts. So far, so good, particularly given that the destination was the sandy shores of Papua New Guinea. Others soon began to arrive, keen to follow in Engelhardt's footsteps. The cult of Sonnenorden (The Order of the Sun) was born. Life was spent worshipping the Sun (thought of as the giver of life) and coconuts (symbolic of the flesh of God). Why coconuts you ask? Engelhardt thought the fruit's make-up to be similar to that of a human head, making it most suitable for man's consumption. His writing gives us his reasoning: "We can expect from God that he created our food in the shape of our heads… vegetal human heads, and they alone are the proper human nourishment." But it turned out that man cannot live on a diet of coconuts alone, and this, combined with malaria and the warm climate, which many of the members were unaccustomed to, eventually resulted in the cult disbanding and returning home to Germany. The German Government tried to ban any further followers from travelling to the island, where Engelhardt remained alone writing about the healing powers of plants and presumably eating plenty of coconuts.

> ‘WE CAN EXPECT FROM GOD THAT HE CREATED OUR FOOD IN THE SHAPE OF OUR HEADS – VEGETAL HUMAN HEADS’

HO NO HANA SANPOGYO

Better known as the Japanese "foot-reading cult", Ho No Hana Sanpogyo is truly unique in its beliefs and practices. It's founder, multimillionaire Hōgen Fukunaga, professed to be another reincarnation of - you guessed it - Jesus Christ but with the added bonus of Buddha and claimed he could diagnose people's ailments and problems by simply examining their feet - rather like a palm reading albeit it a little more cheesy. Fukunaga would often diagnose severe illnesses and even death, encouraging the patient to attend extensive training sessions in order to overcome whatever ailed them.

Fukunaga and his followers were in no way qualified to give these diagnoses but looked to take advantage of people's fear and desperation charging them extortionate amounts of money for the healing sessions, books, scrolls and ornaments said to make them better. New members wishing to join the group would be given initiation tasks and deprived of sleep. Following their training they would be intimidated by Fukunaga's henchmen into giving the cult yet more money.

In 2005 Fukunaga was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment for defrauding his followers of 150 million yen.

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POP CULTURE

THEY HAUNT OUR IMAGINATIONS AND YET WE CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF THEM – PREPARE TO MEET TEN OF THE SCARIEST SECTS IN POPULAR FICTION

WORDS **CALLUM McKELVIE**

What is society's obsession with cults? These malevolent organisations, many of which have stolen, hurt and even killed people are distressing enough to read about in the news. So why are they continually the subject of popular entertainment? In the 1920s and 1930s, evil sects could regularly be found as villains in pulp novels. In fact, the British writer Dennis Wheatley became regarded as an authority on satanic cults when he incorporated one in his 1934 novel, *The Devil Rides Out*. A few years prior, the real-life occultist and supposed cult leader Aleister Crowley had created a reputation for himself as 'the wickedest man in the world', tales of his dark acts shocking the public.

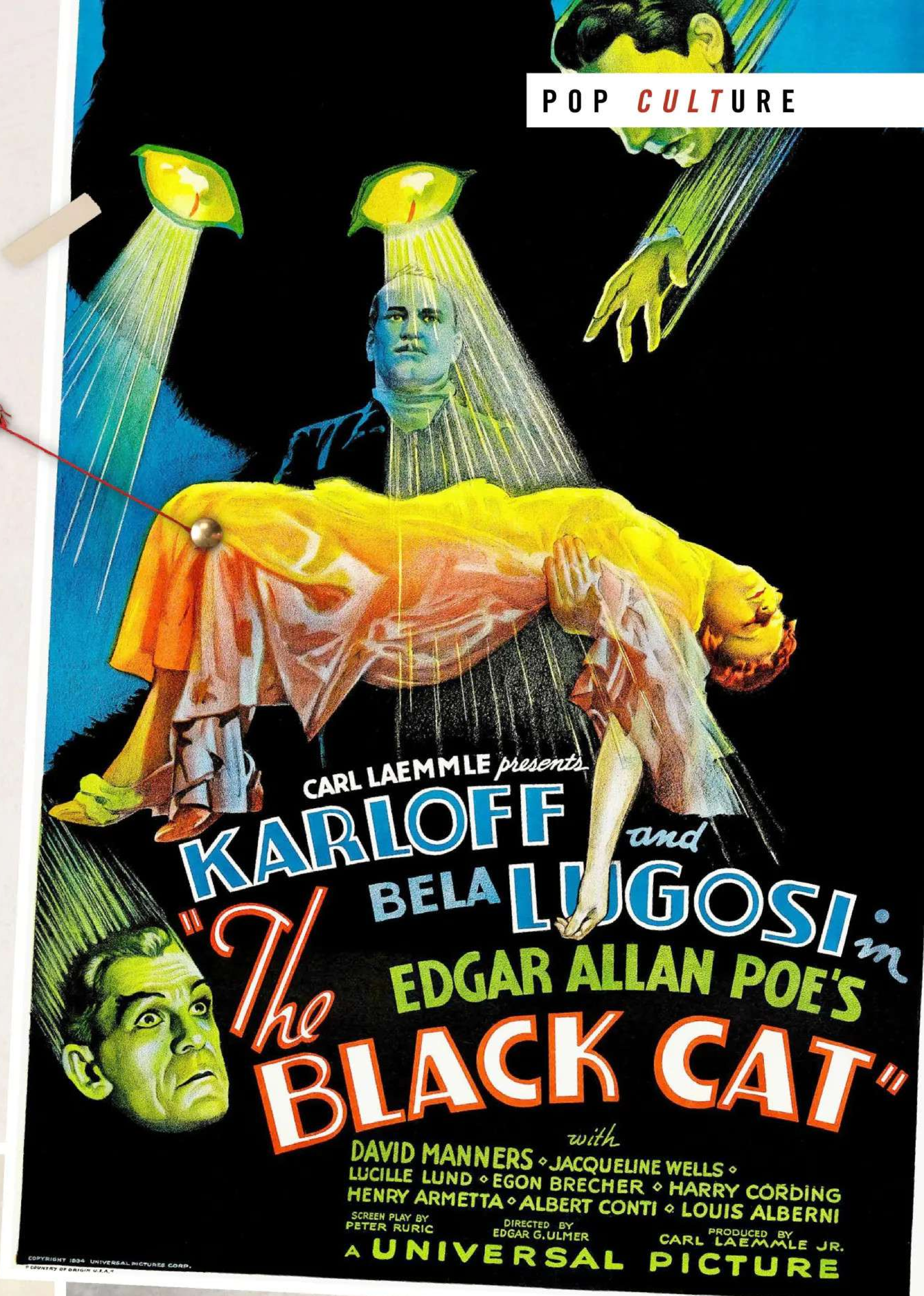
Art has always imitated life, and perhaps these fictional sects allow us to comprehend the upsetting crimes of those in the real world. This might explain why horror, long viewed as a cathartic genre, is somewhat fixated with cults from classics such as *Rosemary's Baby* to the more recent *The Babysitter*. But pop-culture's obsession with sinister sects goes far beyond the horror genre. Renowned and celebrated director Stanley Kubrick's 1999 *Eyes Wide Shut* saw Tom Cruise infiltrate a mysterious masked cult and even family friendly adventure film Indiana Jones and the *Temple of Doom* saw the hero take on the sinister Thuggees – based on a purportedly real group from 19th-century India. From a 1930s horror film to a 2015 sitcom, here are ten of the creepiest examples of cults infiltrating popular culture…

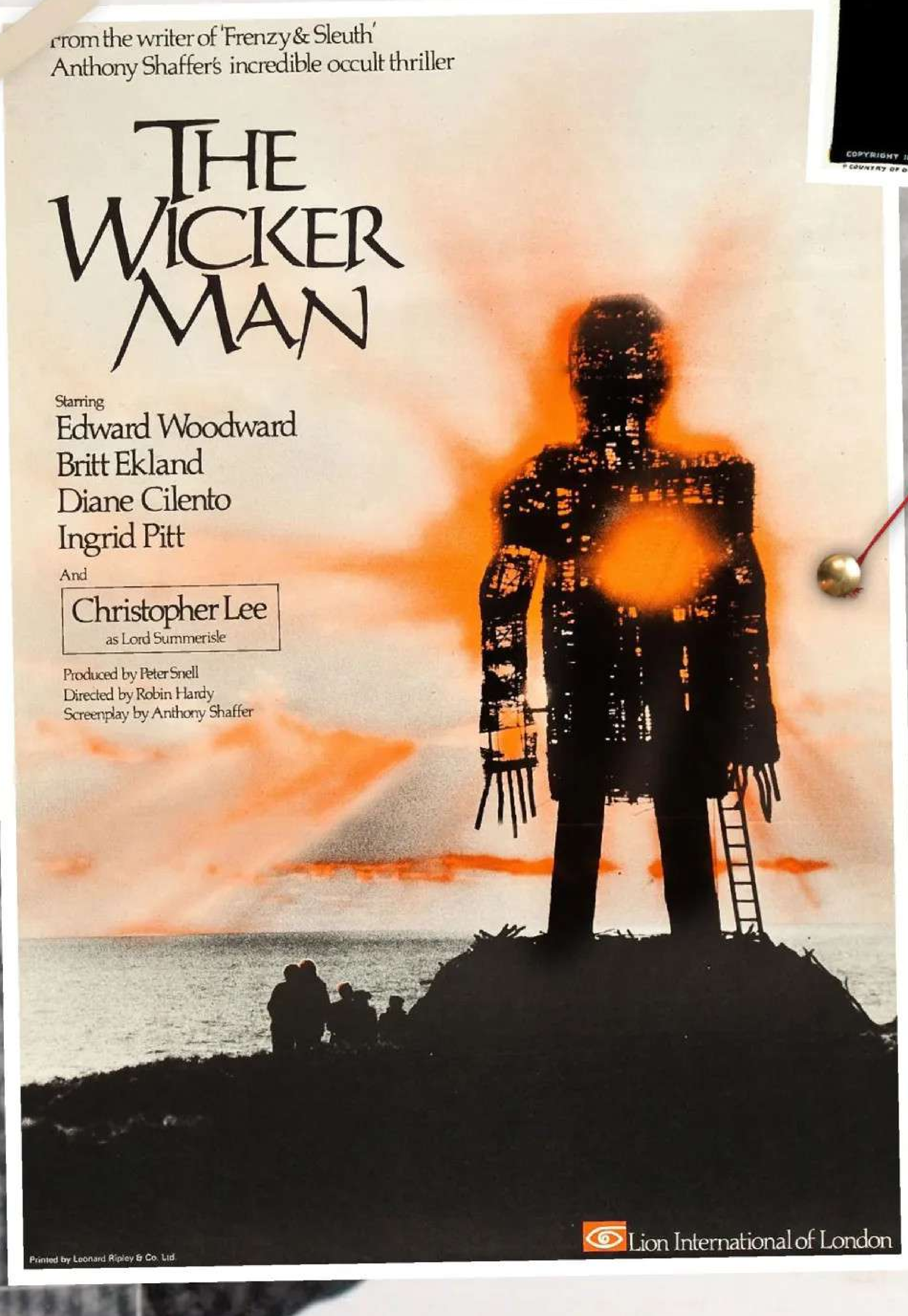
THE BLACK CAT 1934

During the early 1930's Universal Studios were the masters of horror. In 1931 they had produced legendary versions of both Dracula and Frankenstein, starring Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff respectively. In 1934, they united these two horror icons for a film that claimed to be an adaptation of Edgar Allen Poe's *The Black Cat* but was in fact a disturbing tale of a satanic cult.

The film follows a young couple, Peter (David Manners) and Joan (Jacqueline Wells), honeymooning in Hungary. After a bus crash, they and travelling companion Dr Vitus Werdegast (Lugosi) are forced to seek shelter at the home of Hjalmar Poelzig (Karloff), a war criminal and leader of a satanic cult. Poelzig's mansion can only be described as an art deco-inspired nightmare where he preserves the corpses of Werdegast's wife and daughter and seeks to sacrifice Joan in the name of the devil.

Made pre-code, before overtly violent content became forbidden in horror films, *The Black Cat* is surprisingly dark and shocking in both its themes and execution. With overtones of sadism, satanism and suggestions of necrophilia, 90 years later it remains a disturbing depiction of a devil-worshipping sect.


CARL LAEMMLE presents
KARLOFF and
BELA LUGOSI in
EDGAR ALLAN POE'S
"The BLACK CAT"
with
DAVID MANNERS ◇ JACQUELINE WELLS ◇
LUCILLE LUND ◇ EGON BRECHER ◇ HARRY CORDING
HENRY ARMETTA ◇ ALBERT CONTI ◇ LOUIS ALBERNI
SCREEN PLAY BY PETER RURIC
DIRECTED BY EDGAR G. ULMER
PRODUCED BY CARL LAEMMLE JR.
A UNIVERSAL PICTURE


From the writer of 'Frenzy & Sleuth'
Anthony Shaffer's incredible occult thriller
THE WICKER MAN
Starring
Edward Woodward
Britt Ekland
Diane Cilento
Ingrid Pitt
And
Christopher Lee
as Lord Summerisle
Produced by Peter Snell
Directed by Robin Hardy
Screenplay by Anthony Shaffer
Lion International of London
Printed by Leonard Ripley & Co. Ltd.

THE WICKER MAN 1973

Directed by Robin Hardy and with a script written by master of mystery Anthony Shaffer, *The Wicker Man* is perhaps the most famous cult-themed movie. This British film tells the story of a devout Catholic police sergeant named Neil Howie (played by Edward Woodward), who travels to the Hebridean Island of Summerisle to investigate the disappearance of a young girl.

To his Christian disgust, Howie discovers that the islanders are all members of a pagan cult led by patriarch Lord Summerisle. The island is noted for its unusually rich soil and fruit produce, believed to be the work of their pagan deities. However, after a number of disastrous harvests, Lord Summerisle believes the gods are angry and that only the perfect sacrifice will please them.

With a number of impromptu musical numbers, a superb performance by horror legend Christopher Lee as Lord Summerisle, and bizarre, surreal imagery, *The Wicker Man* is a highly unusual film. Disregarded upon its original release and with heavy cuts imposed by the studio, it has since become a cinematic classic. Like the islanders' belief in the old gods, *The Wicker Man* is a film that refuses to die.

MIDSOMMAR 2019

Ari Aster's follow-up to his 2018 hit *Hereditary*, *Midsommar* harks back to the 1973 cult classic *The Wicker Man* with its imagery and folk horror themes. The film follows Dani and Christian (Florence Pugh and Jack Reynor), a dysfunctional couple who seem destined for a breakup. However, when Dani loses her family in a horrifying murder-suicide, the pair are convinced to join their friends on a trip to a remote Swedish village.

Here they witness the locals (the Hårga's) Midsommar practices, which slowly become more disturbing as the festival goes on. In particular, the group are horrified when they witness a ritual in which the elders throw themselves off a cliff. This sequence was based on Swedish folklore surrounding Ättestupa cliff sites, where ritual suicide is said to have taken place.

It soon becomes clear that the group of friends are intended to be the sacrifices for the Hårga's final ritual. However, as the film continues Dani's emotional journey takes precedence over the enigmatic practices of the cult. Her relationship with Christian is ultimately put to the test and the film becomes a metaphor for heartbreak and emotional rebirth, with the Hårga's rituals representing Dani's emotional state.

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM 1984

The second cinematic outing for everyone's favourite adventuring archaeologist see's Indiana Jones travel to India to take on the Thuggee cult of the goddess Kali. This insidious organisation has stolen one of the sacred Sankara Stones, abducted children and committed horrifying acts of human sacrifice in the name of its deity.

The film was criticised by concerned parents upon its release due to its overtly dark tone. One nightmare-inducing sequence features the cult leader Mola Ram (played by Amrish Puri) literally ripping a man's heart out of his chest. Of course, Indiana Jones saves the day and defeats the cult, the majority of its members falling prey to a hoard of hungry crocodiles.

These cinematic villains are based on the purportedly real-life cult that was said to have terrorised travellers throughout colonial India during the 19th century. Its members were supposed to have strangled their victims, some 40,000 in total. However, the question of whether such a cult truly existed or was in fact a creation of British colonialists remains controversial.

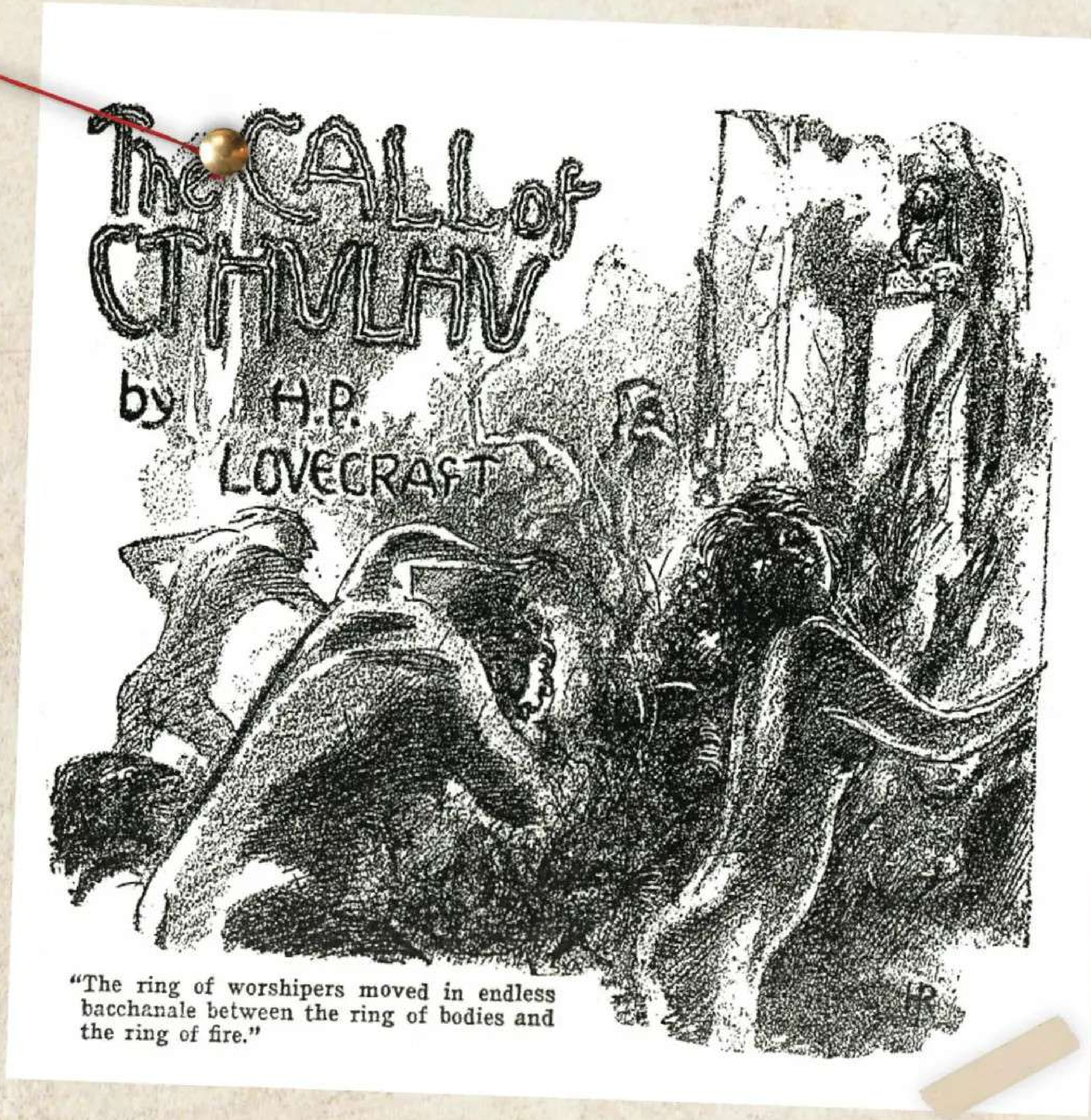
In the years since its release *Temple of Doom* has continued to garner criticism for its stereotypical characters and treatment of Indian culture.

THE CALL OF CTHULHU 1928

The ancient tentacled god Cthulhu is perhaps the most famous creation of the father of 'cosmic horror', H.P. Lovecraft. Originally published in *Weird Tales* in 1928, the short story is written in the epistolary style and weaves together a number of narratives concerning the titular nightmarish deity and his fanatical followers.

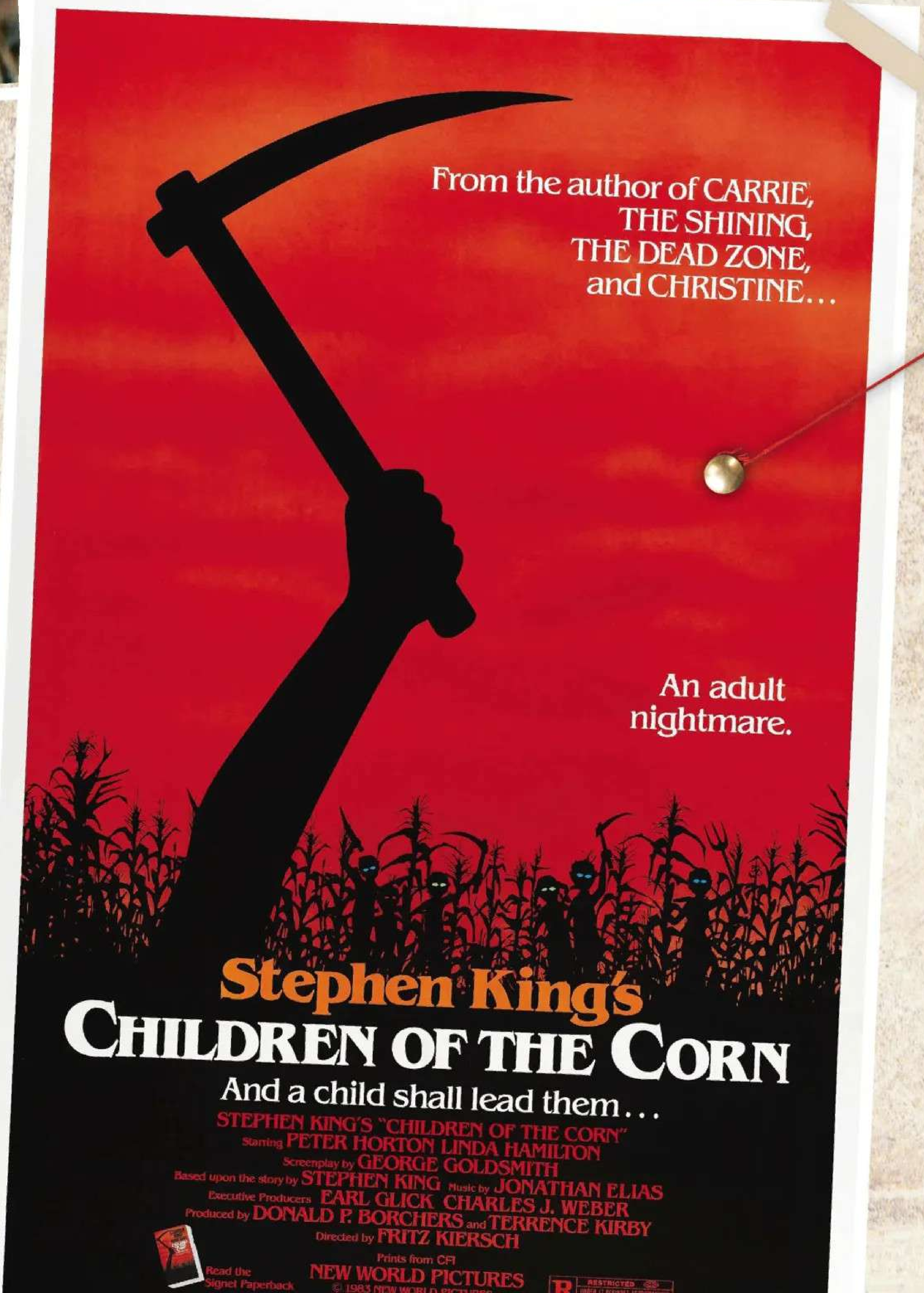
Cthulhu is one of the 'old ones', an ancient race of interplanetary creatures created by Lovecraft that are sleeping now but will one day reawaken and rule the world. The story features not one large Cthulhu-worshipping sect but a number of different groups. These cults are all compelled to follow the tentacled monstrosity after the god sends out his malevolent dreams telepathically.

These were not the only creepy cults created by Lovecraft, who also invented The Esoteric Order of Dagon (appearing in the story *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*) alongside a handful of other shadowy sects. In the decades since his passing Lovecraft's fiction has only grown in popularity, with subsequent authors building on the mythology he created. Now Cthulhu is the subject of role-playing games, comics, movies, TV shows and even a cute cuddly plush doll.


The CALL of CTHULHU
by H.P. LOVECRAFT

"The ring of worshipers moved in endless bacchanale between the ring of bodies and the ring of fire."

“ THE TOWN'S CHILDREN WORSHIP A DEMONIC CREATURE LIVING IN THE SURROUNDING CORNFIELDS ”


From the author of CARRIE, THE SHINING, THE DEAD ZONE, and CHRISTINE...
An adult nightmare.
Stephen King's
CHILDREN OF THE CORN
And a child shall lead them...
STEPHEN KING'S "CHILDREN OF THE CORN"
Starring PETER HORTON LINDA HAMILTON
Screenplay by GEORGE GOLDSMITH
Based upon the story by STEPHEN KING Music by JONATHAN ELIAS
Executive Producers EARL GLICK CHARLES J. WEBER
Produced by DONALD P. BORCHERS and TERRENCE KIRBY
Directed by FRITZ KIERSCH
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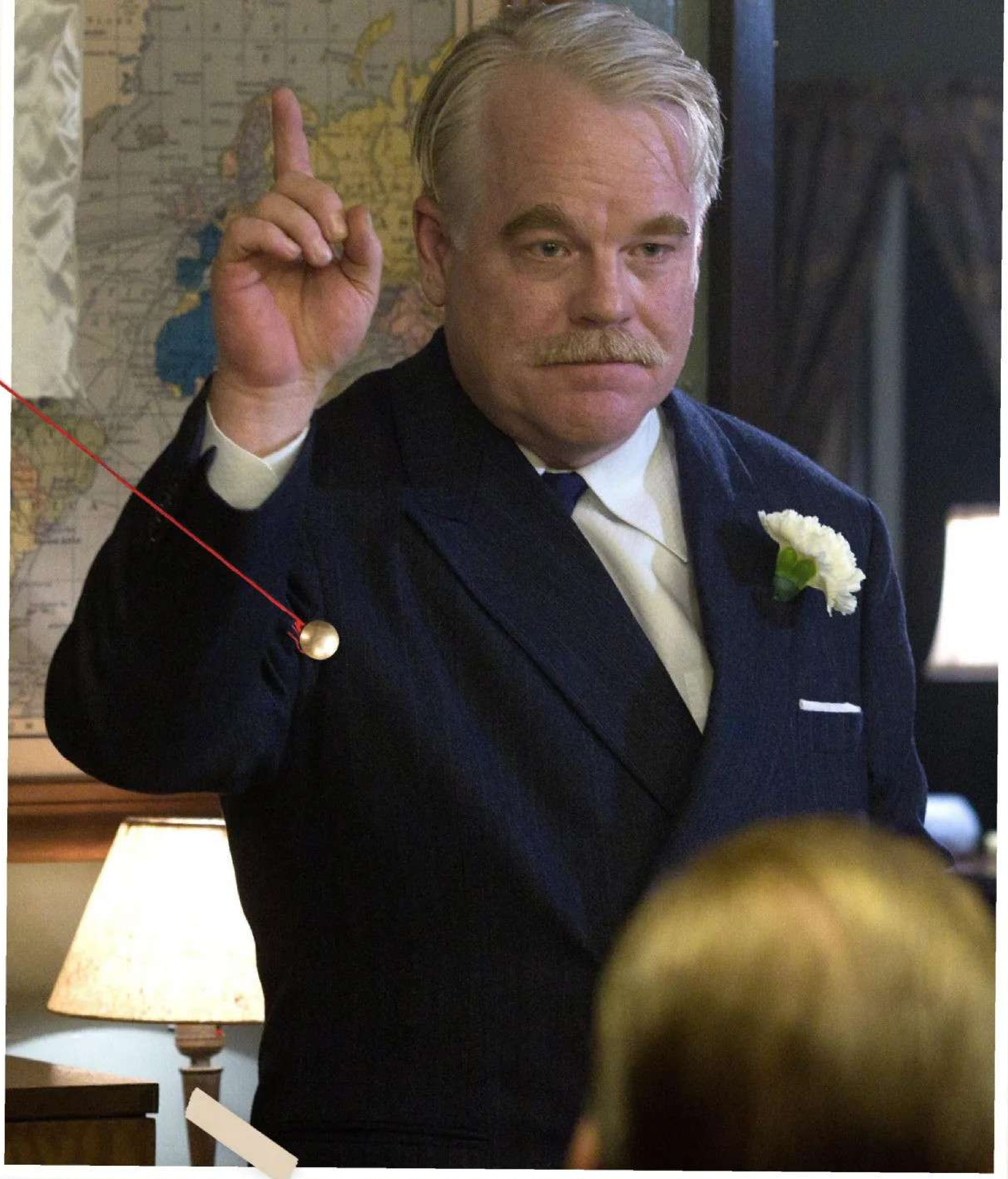
CHILDREN OF THE CORN 1977

When Stephen King, the master of horror, put pen to paper and wrote 1977's short story *Children of the Corn*, he created one of the most terrifying fictional cults. The tale tells of Burt and Vicky, who find themselves in the deserted town of Gatlin, Nebraska. There they discover that years 12 prior, the town's children slaughtered the adults and now worship a demonic creature living in the surrounding cornfields – He Who Walks Behind the Rows.

This cult of kiddie killers is led by nine-year-old Isaac, who speaks with the conviction of a pint-sized evangelist and conjures images of boy preachers. Burt discovers that at 19 the children must sacrifice themselves to their god. At the climax, with Burt and Vicky dead but dissatisfied with his followers, the entity demands that all 18 year olds must walk into the cornfields, final offerings for He Who Walks Behind the Rows...

In 1984 a film version was made starring Peter Horton and Linda Hamilton, and there have been no less than ten follow-ups. Of the adaptations, King told *Deadline* in 2016 that "I actually like the original pretty well" but "I could do without all the sequels."



THE MASTER 2012

This 2012 film is considered by director Paul Thomas Anderson, famous for helming many modern art-house classics such as *Magnolia* (1999) and *Phantom Thread* (2017), to be his personal favourite of his own widely praised filmography. *The Master* is a dark and moving drama inspired by the father of Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard, but tells its tale through a fictional substitute in Lancaster Dodd.

The film focuses on Joaquin Phoenix's Freddie Quell, an alcoholic veteran of World War II. Set in the years just after the conflict, we follow Quell as he becomes embroiled with Dodd's (Philip Seymour-Hoffman) movement 'The Cause'. Dodd sees Quell as the perfect potential acolyte and begins his unique form of 'processing', with disturbing sequences in which Dodd asks him probing psychological questions.

A sinister and upsetting look at a broken and damaged man looking for guidance but instead falling under the spell of an ever-growing cult, the film was highly successful upon its release both critically and commercially, and both Hoffman and Phoenix received Oscar nominations for their roles.

> “*THE MASTER* IS A DARK AND MOVING DRAMA INSPIRED BY THE FATHER OF SCIENTOLOGY, L. RON HUBBARD”

MARTHA MARCY MAY MARLENE 2011

This film stars Elizabeth Olsen as Martha, a member of a cult led by the charismatic Patrick in the Catskill Mountains. He has renamed her “Marcy May”, while “Marlene” is a codename used by the women in the cult to answer the phone. There are a lot of women in Patrick's cult, all of which are expected to sleep with him and who he drugs and rapes as part of a depraved 'initiation' ritual.

Martha escapes and stays with her sister Lucy (Sarah Paulson) and her husband Ted (Hugh Dancy) at their vacation lake house. Here she suffers frequent flashbacks, remembering how Patrick attempted to convince her to kill a cat as well as various robberies she committed in the cult's name, one of which ended in a brutal murder.

Traumatised and struggling with the effects of Patrick's brainwashing, Elizabeth Olsen gives a truly astounding performance as the title character that was widely praised upon release. In a video for *Vanity Fair*, cult deprogrammer Rick Alan Ross describes Martha Marcy May Marlene as “the gold standard for any movie about cults”.

UNBREAKABLE KIMMY SCHMIDT 2015–2020

A sitcom about a woman who escapes from a doomsday cult might not sound like the most light-hearted prospect, but this Netflix original series was highly acclaimed upon its release. The show follows the titular character, played by Ellie Kemper, who has been held by the Reverend Richard Wayne Gary Wayne (played by Jon Hamm) for 15 years in an underground bunker. During this time she was led to believe that the world had ended in a fiery nuclear apocalypse and that she and her fellow captives were the only survivors.

Now set free, Kimmy struggles to adjust to life in New York. Moving in with flamboyant wannabe actor Titus Andromedon (Tituss Burgess) and their tough landlady Lillian Kaushtupper (Carol Kane), Kimmy has to find her own way in the world away from the cult.

Despite its comic leanings, this fish-out-of-water sitcom still made interesting points about the nature of cults. One of Kimmy's fellow 'Mole Women' in the reverend's cult is Gretchen Chalker. The only truly devout member, she later joins another cult before Kimmy accidentally convinces her to start her own.

THE ENDLESS 2017

Starring writer/director duo Justin Benson and Aaron Moorehead, *The Endless* follows a pair of brothers, also named Justin and Aaron, who are struggling to make ends meet. As children they escaped from Camp Arcadia, which Justin describes as a "UFO death-cult". However, Aaron's memories of the group are much more pleasant and he seems dissatisfied with life since he left.

When the brothers receive a mysterious videotape in the post they find themselves compelled to visit the group once more. After spending some time at Camp Arcadia, Aaron begins to miss their way of life while Justin remains sceptical. His scepticism turns to fear as increasingly bizarre and disturbing events start to occur, including the site of multiple moons rising over the cult's encampment. The brothers soon become convinced that the cult worships a malevolent deity and they desperately attempt to escape its followers.

With mind-bending twists and lashings of cosmic horror, *The Endless* may be a slow build but its villainous entity is a truly frightening creation. Subtextually, the film examines how outwardly pleasant organisations fronted by seemingly friendly and welcoming individuals can hide a dark and sinister underbelly.

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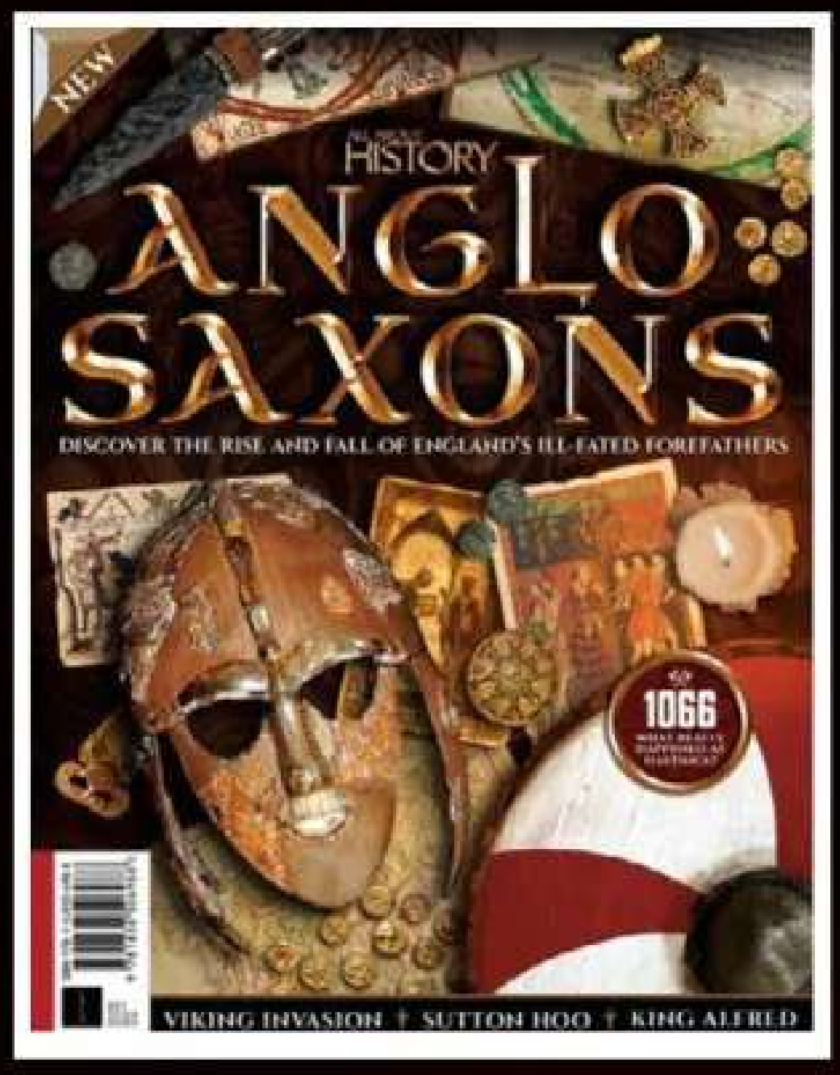
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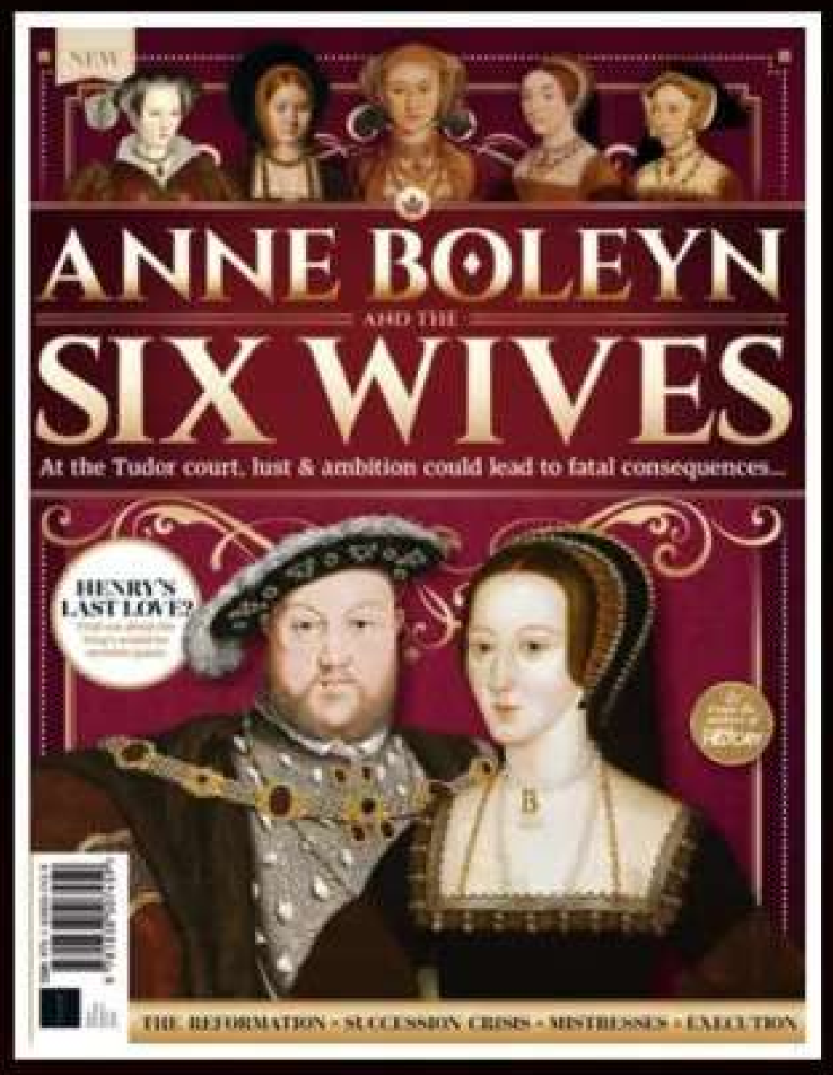
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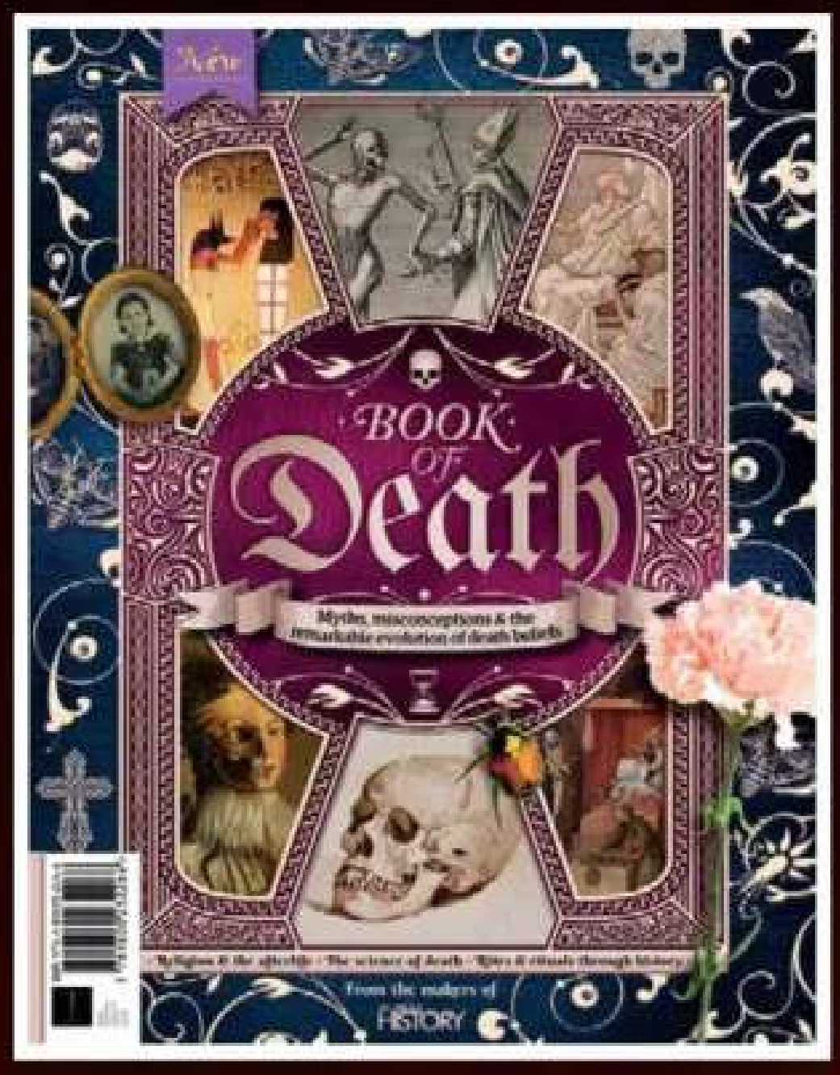
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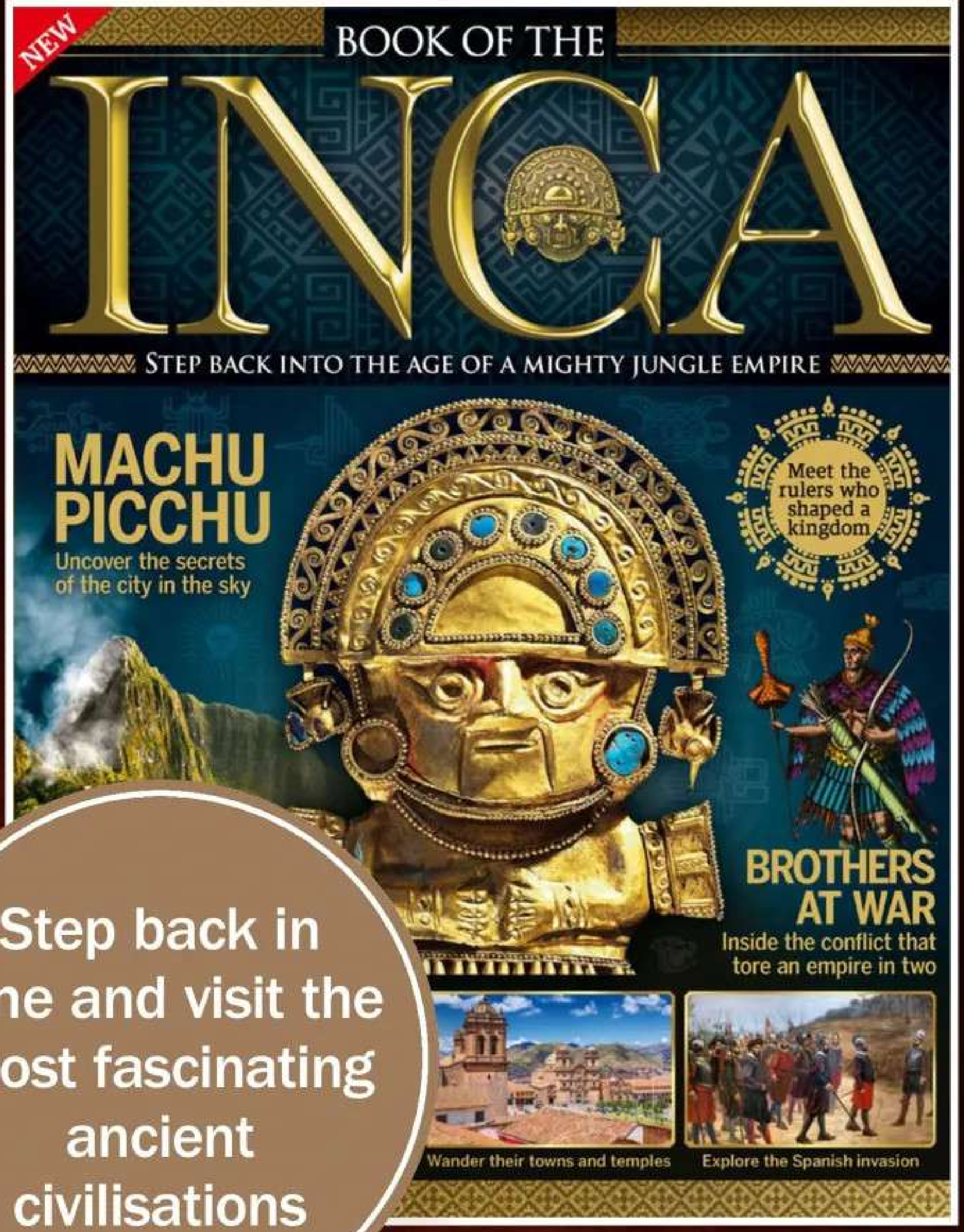
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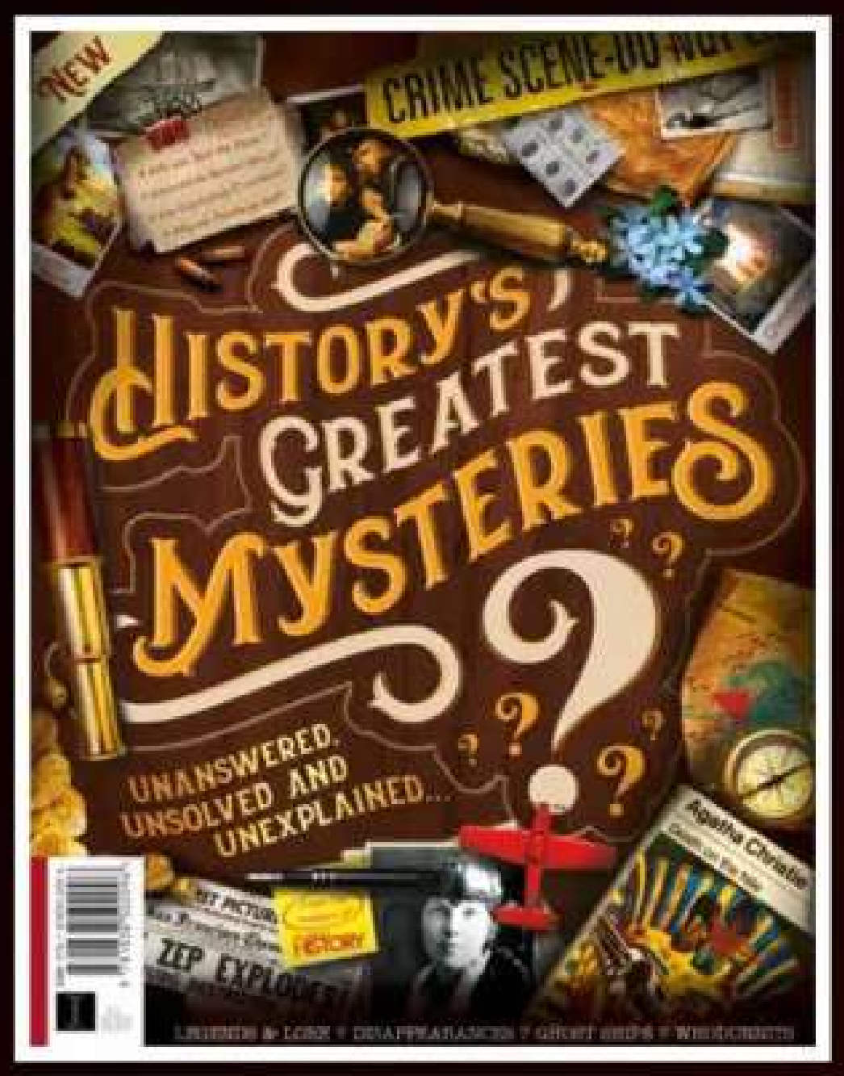
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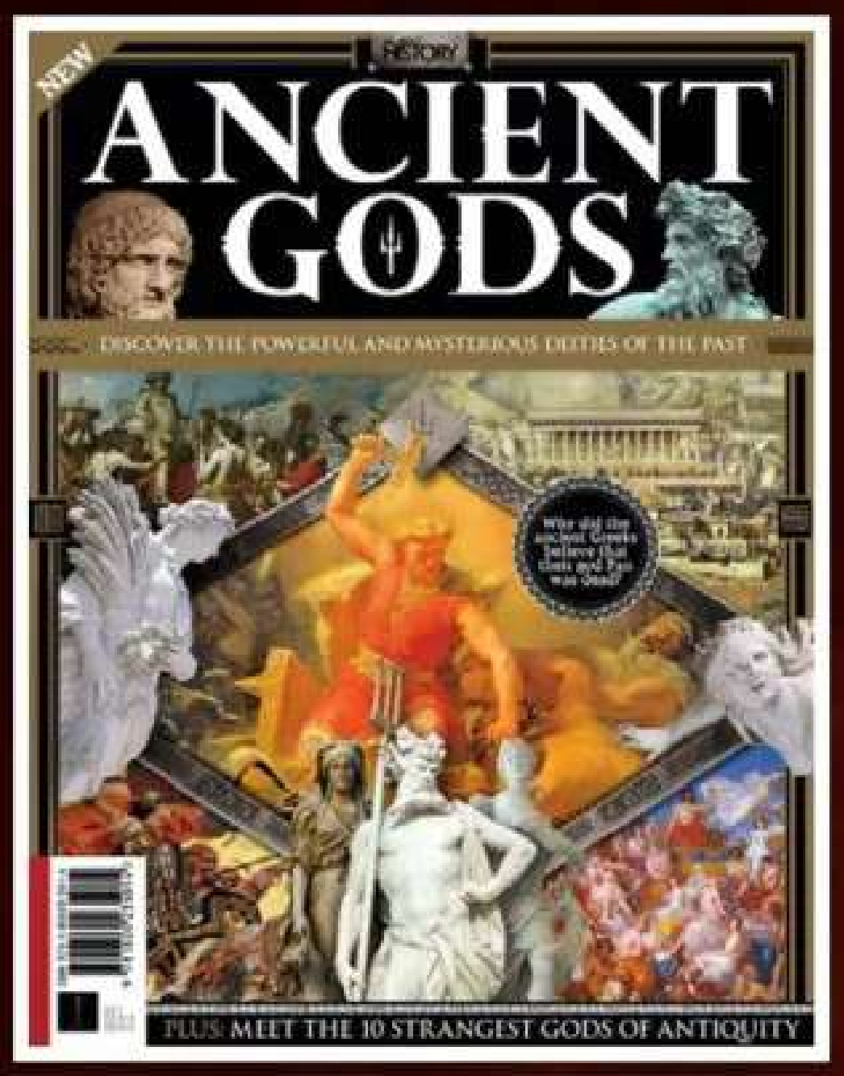
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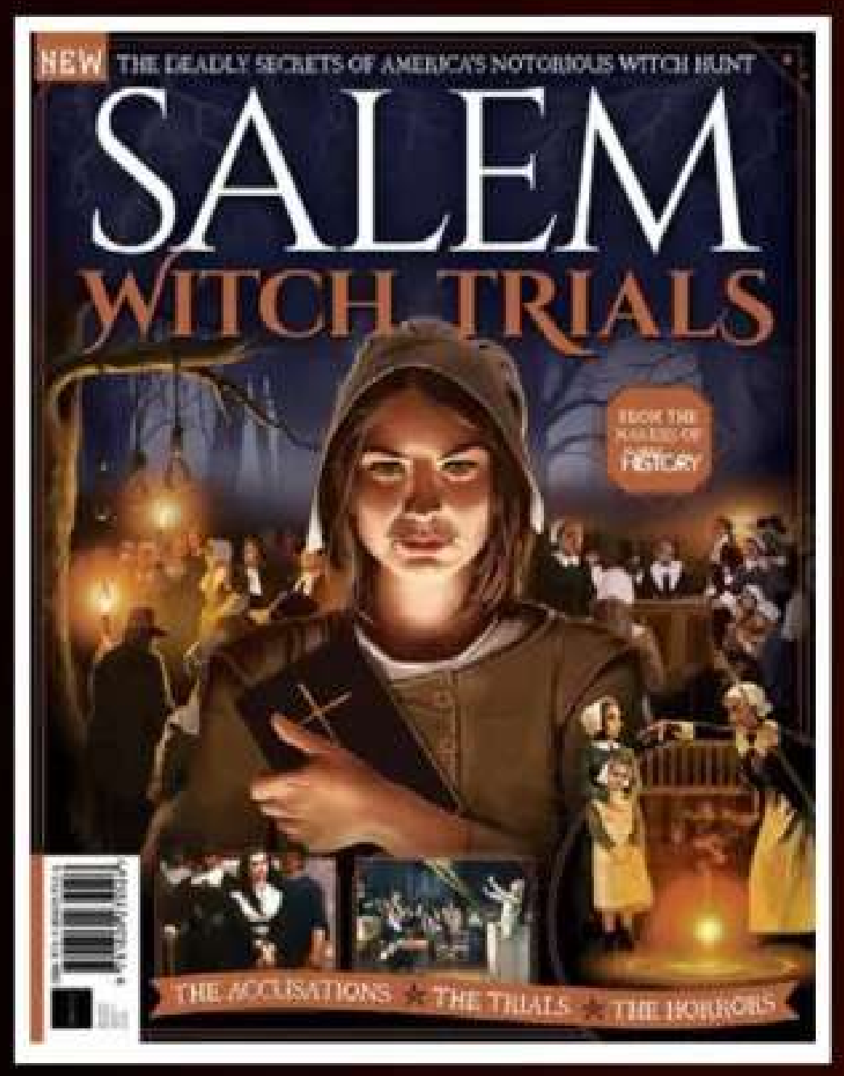
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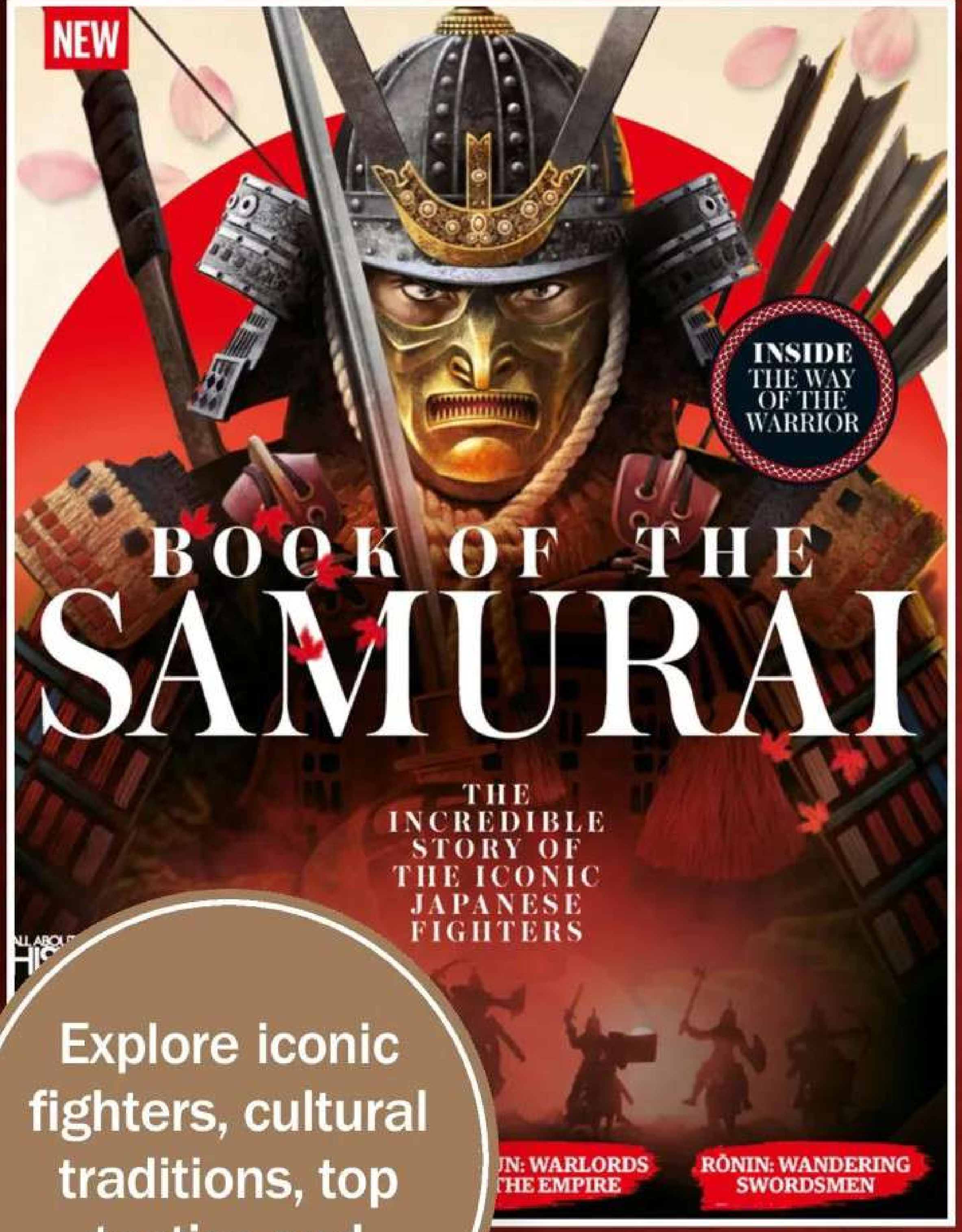
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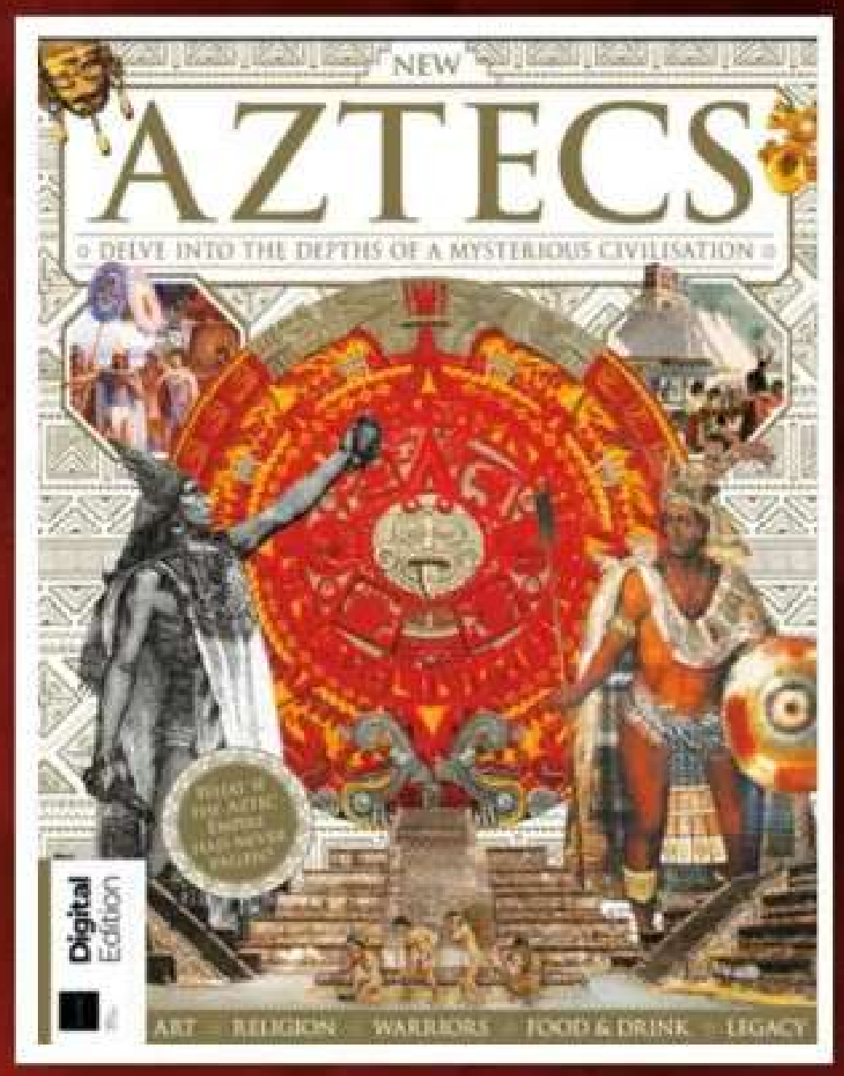

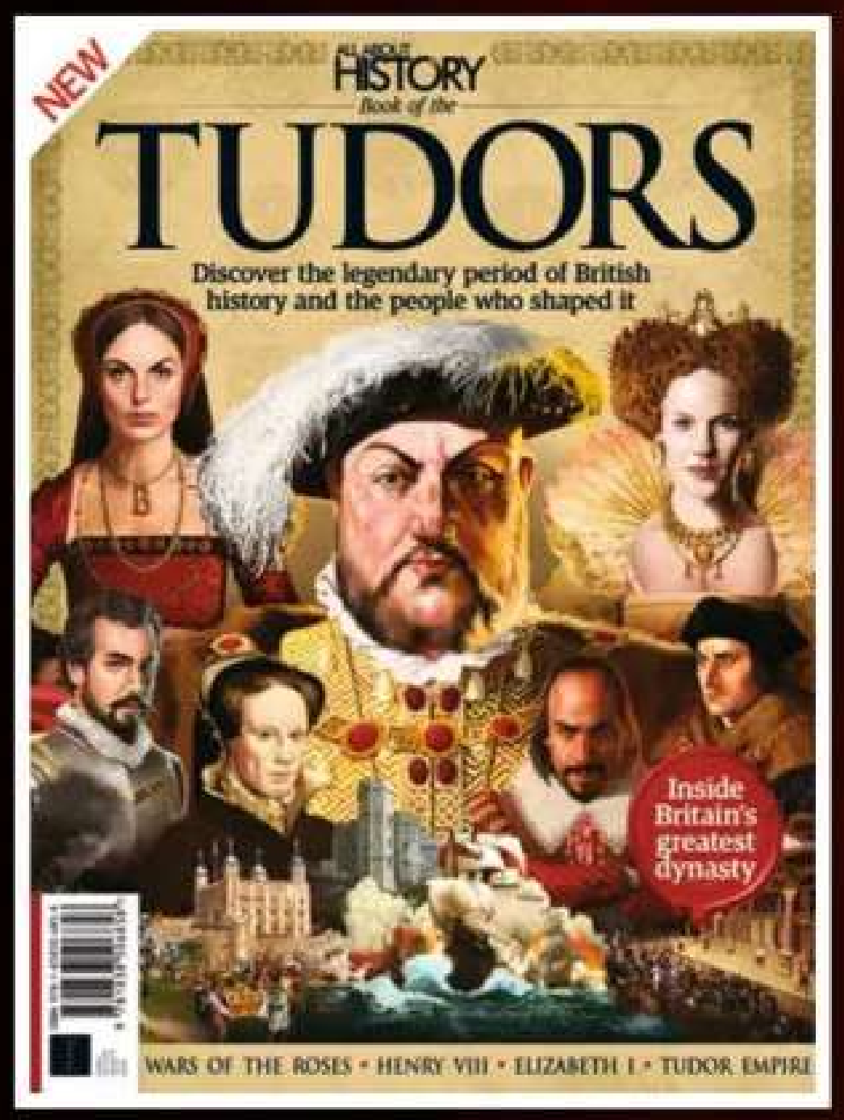

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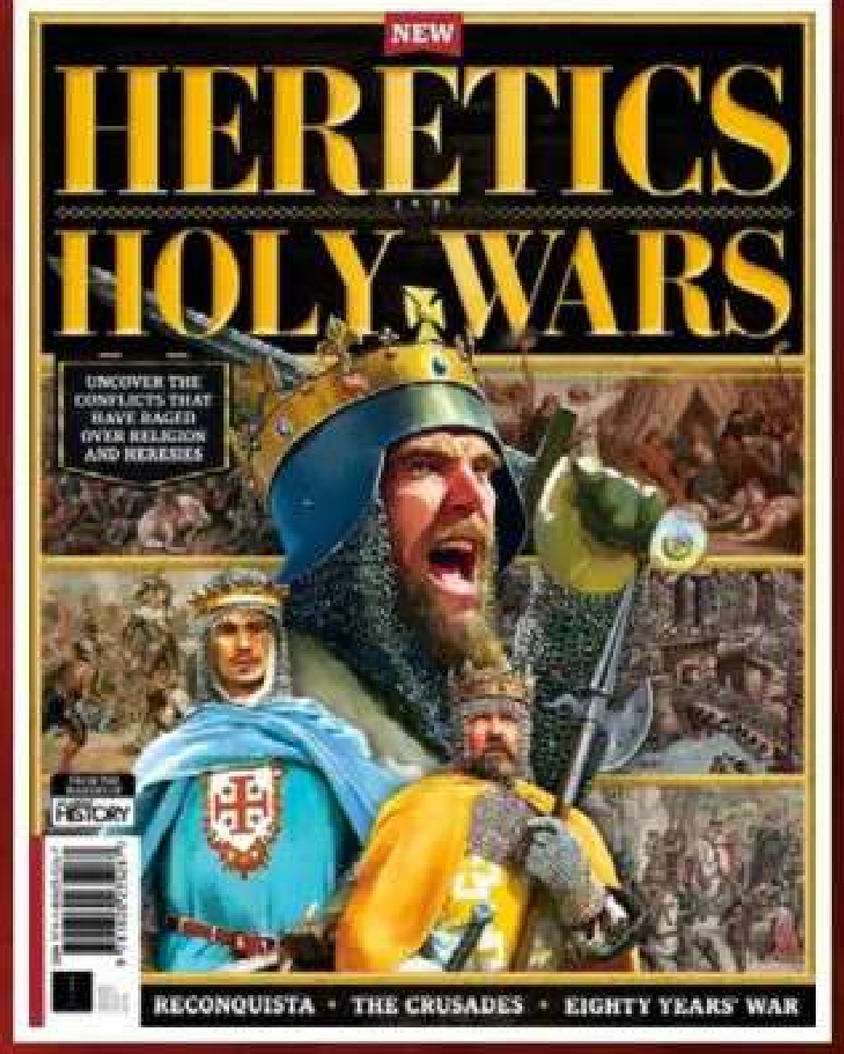
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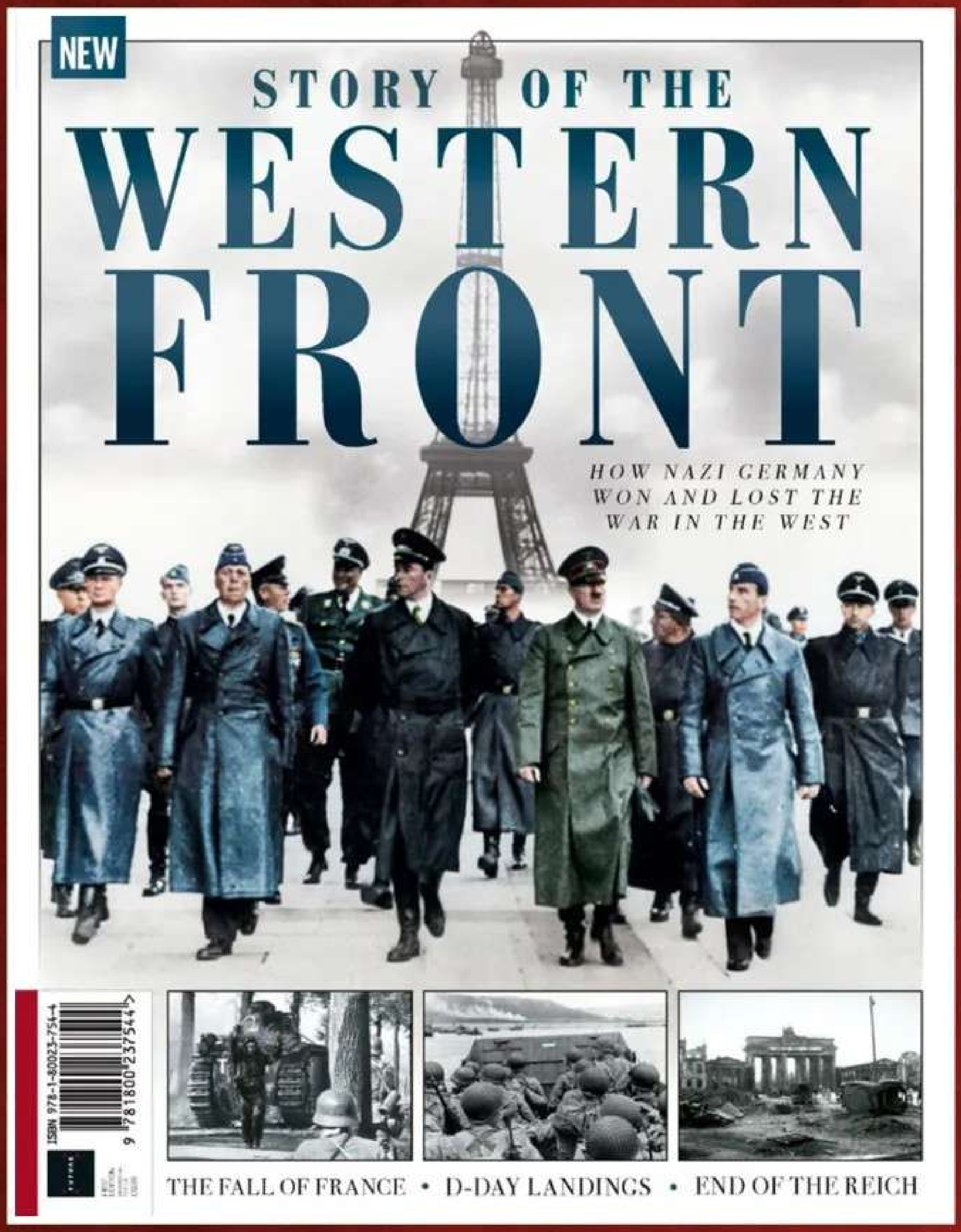
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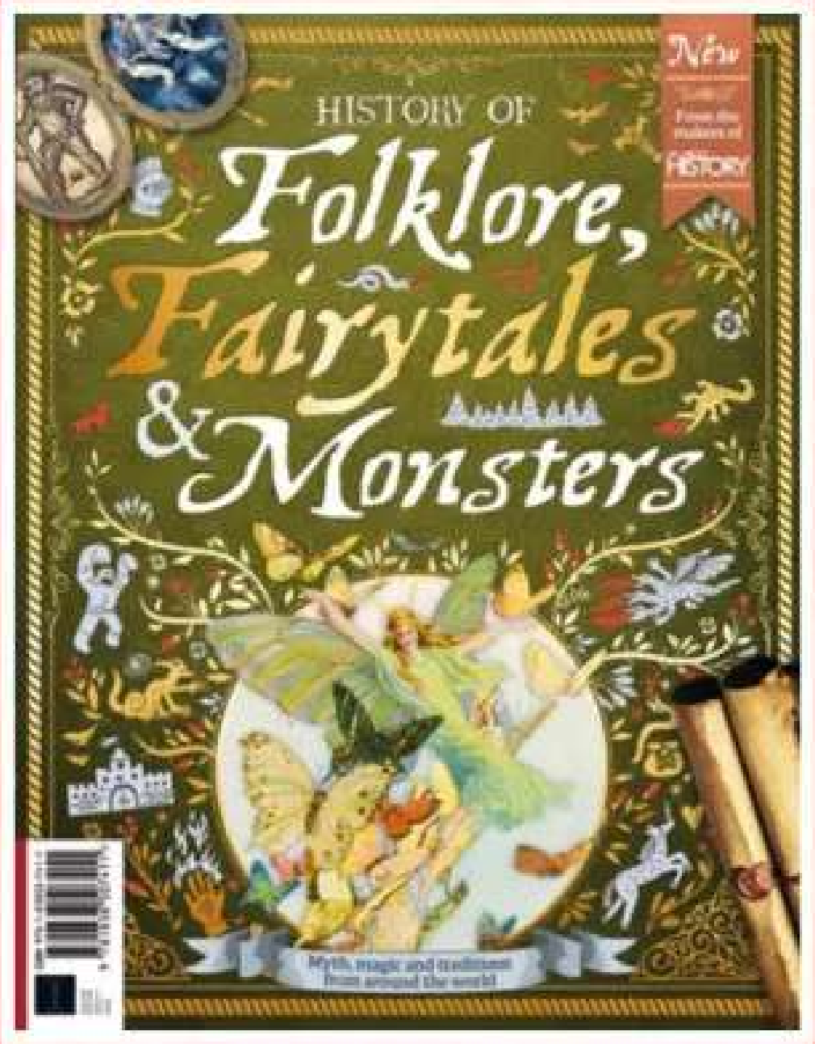
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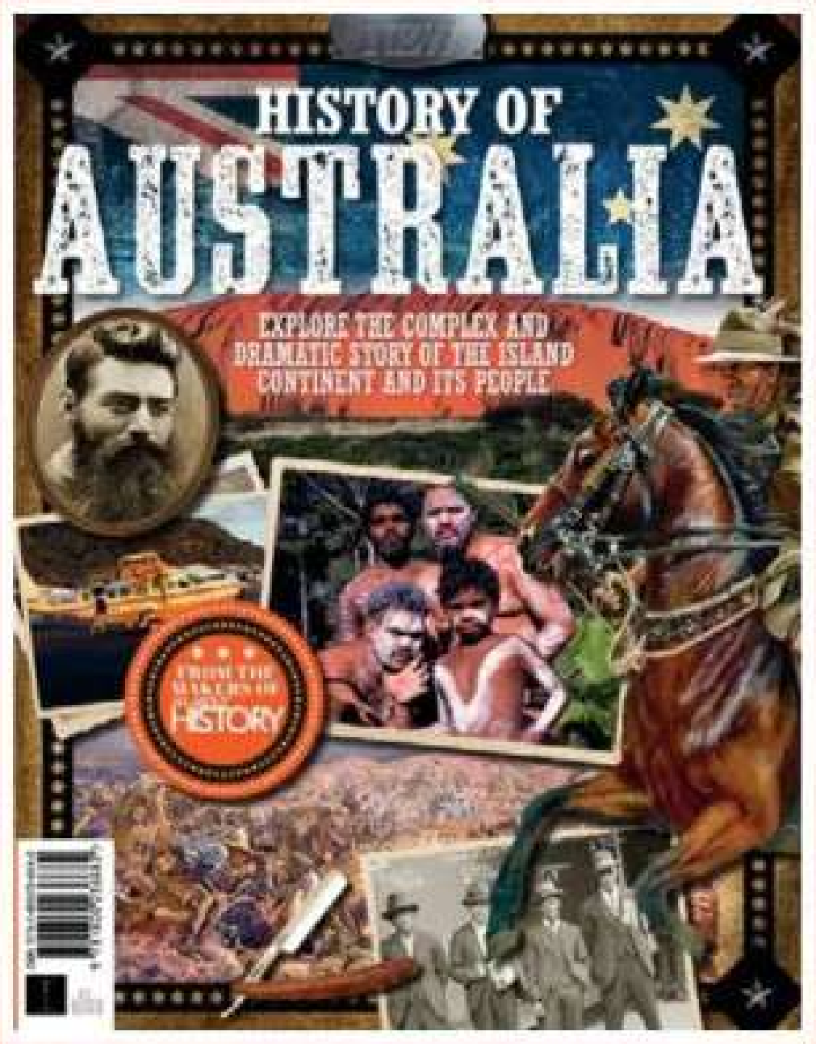
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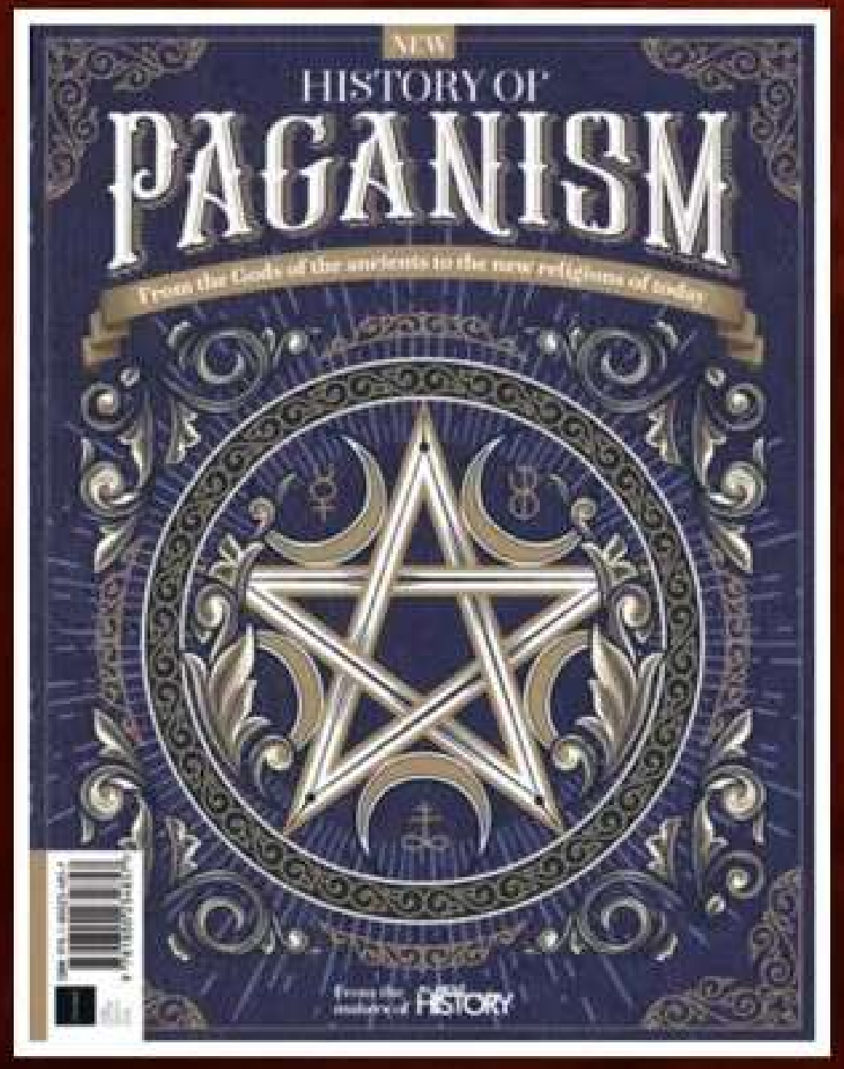
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"To me death is not a fearful thing. It's living that's cursed."

REVEREND JIM JONES

"If the Bible is true, then I'm Christ."

DAVID KORESH

"You don't get rich writing science fiction. If you want to get rich you start a religion."

L. RON HUBBARD

"I'm nobody.
I'm a tramp, a bum, a hobo.
I'm a boxcar and a jug of wine.
And a straight razor...
if you get too close to me."

CHARLES MANSON

"I WAS ONE OF THOSE KIDS WHO THOUGHT I COULD BE PRESIDENT OF ENGLAND WHEN I GREW UP IF I WANTED TO. THEN I STARTED ACTING AND REALISED LIFE IS HARD AND PEOPLE ARE MEAN AND THERE'S NO PRESIDENT OF ENGLAND AND I'M NOT BRITISH."

MARSHALL APPLEWHITE

"It is the obligation of Westboro Baptist Church to put the cup of God's fury to America's lips, and cause America to drink it. And you will drink it!"

FRED PHELPS

"Democracy basically means government by the people, of the people, for the people; but the people are retarded."

BHAGWAN SHREE RAJNEESH

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THE HISTORY OF

CULTS

INSIDE THE MINDS OF FALSE PROPHETS AND THEIR FOLLOWERS

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLES

MANY FOLLOWERS OF MANSON DRIFTED IN AND OUT OF THE HIPPIE COMMUNE, BUT AN INTEGRAL FEW BECAME KEY PLAYERS IN HIS DERANGED FAMILY

THE 'FAMILY' FROM HELL

TEX WATSON
BOBBY BEAUSOLEIL
BRUCE DAVIS
SUSAN ATKINS
LINDA KASABIAN
CATHERINE SHARE
STEVE GROGAN
PATRICIA KRENWINKEL
LESLIE VAN HOUTEN
SANDRA GOOD
SQUEAKY FROMME

MEET THE MURDEROUS MEMBERS OF THE MANSON FAMILY

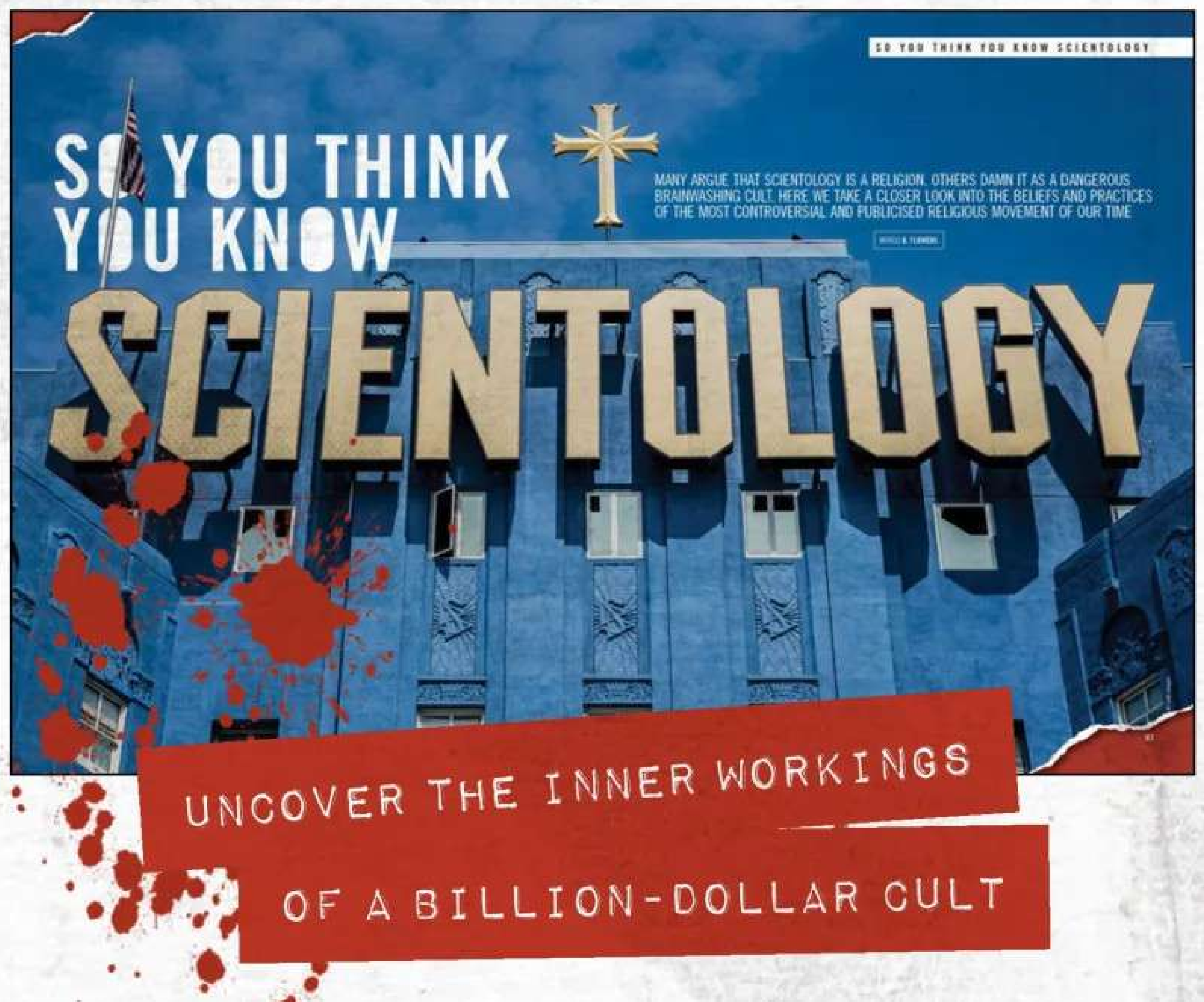
PROPHETS OF DOOM

RED ALERT IN WASCO COUNTY

SOME LOCALS SOLD UP AND FLED. OTHERS USED PHOTOS OF THE BHAGWAN FOR SHOOTING PRACTICE

CITY OF RAJNEESH

INSIDE THE MOVEMENT THAT BUILT ITS OWN CITY



SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW SCIENTOLOGY

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW SCIENTOLOGY

MANY ARGUE THAT SCIENTOLOGY IS A RELIGION, OTHERS DAMN IT AS A DANGEROUS BRAINWASHING CULT. HERE WE TAKE A CLOSER LOOK INTO THE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL AND PUBLICISED RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT OF OUR TIME

UNCOVER THE INNER WORKINGS OF A BILLION-DOLLAR CULT

POP CULTURE

MIDSOMMAR 2019

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